Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava

Three volumes

Bhakti Vikāsa Swami

Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava

The Grandeur and Glory of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

by Bhakti Vikāsa Swami

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Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅgau Jayataḥ

Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava

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Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava

The Grandeur and Glory of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

Volume One

by Bhakti Vikāsa Swami

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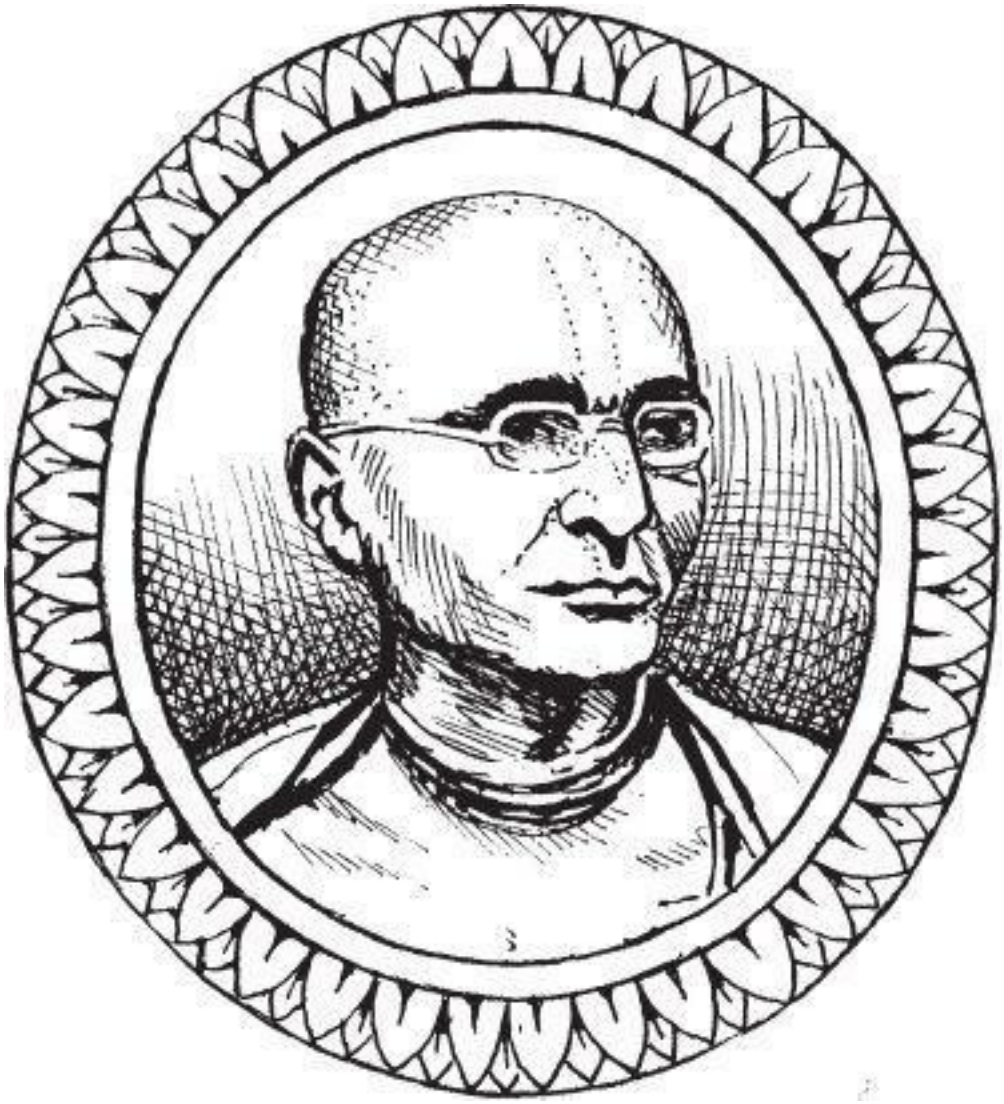

If to carry out the command of the Vaiṣṇava guru I have to be arrogant or brutish, or suffer eternal perdition, I am prepared to welcome such eternal damnation and even sign a contract to that effect. I will not listen to the words of malicious persons in lieu of the command of Śrī Gurudeva. I will dissipate with indomitable courage and conviction the currents of thought of the rest of the world, relying on the strength derived from the lotus feet of Śrī Gurudeva. I confess to this arrogance.

—Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

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In his room at the Kuñja-bihārī Maṭha in Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī instructed Śrī Abhaya Caraṇāravinda dāsa, “If you ever get money, print books.” Also present were Śrī Ananta Vāsudeva dāsa (shown here fanning Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī) and a son of Śrī Abhaya Caraṇāravinda dāsa.

Based on a description told by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda to his disciple Śrī Ādi-keśava dāsa, this scene was painted by another of his disciples, Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta dāsa.

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Bengal

Abbreviations of Book Titles

An asterisk indicates a compilation of the teachings of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, or a book written about him.

Av: *Amrta vani*[*]

Bg: *Bhagavad-gītā*

Brs: *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*

Cb: *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*

Cc: *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*

Gv: *Śrīla Prabhupādera Goloka-vāṇī*[*]

Hk: *Śrīla Prabhupādera Hari-kathāmṛta*[*]

PST: *Prabhupada Saraswati Thakur*[*] (English)

SB: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*

SBT: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavat Tātparya*[*] (English)

SCT: *Shri Chaitanya's Teachings*[*] (English)

Sj: *Sarasvatī-jayaśrī*[*]

SPl: *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta* (English)

SPU: *Śrī Śrīla Prabhupādera Upadeśāmṛta*[*]

Guide to References

References are given according to the following examples:

Av 10: *Amrta vani,* p. 10.

Cc 1.16: *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā,* chap. 16.

Cc 2.16.22: *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā,* chap. 16, verse 22.

Cc 3.2.75, 77–80: *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā,* chap. 2, verse 75 and verses 77–80.*

Gauḍīya 3.27.8–13: *Gauḍīya,* vol. 3, no. 27, pp. 8–13.

Gauḍīya 14.163: *Gauḍīya,* vol. 14, p. 163.

Gauḍīya 20.48–49.540: *Gauḍīya,* vol. 20, nos. 48–49, p. 540.‡

Harmonist 31.487: *Harmonist,* vol. 31, p. 487.

Hk 2.15: *Śrīla Prabhupādera Hari-kathāmṛta,* vol. 2, p. 15.

Śikṣāṣṭaka 4: *Śikṣāṣṭaka,* verse 4.

Sj 24: *Sarasvatī-jayaśrī,* p. 24.

Some references cited herein are from Gauḍīya Maṭha editions and differ from those in corresponding Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (BBT) publications.

Maṅgalācaraṇa

nama oṁ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine

namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe

I salute him who is known in this world as His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is of the same status as Lord Viṣṇu and is most dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

I offer homage to the servant of Sarasvatī Gosvāmī who, by preaching the message of Lord Caitanya, is delivering the Western countries from impersonalism and voidism.

nama oṁ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktisiddhānta-sarasvatīti nāmine

śrī-vārṣabhānavī-devī-dayitāya kṛpābdhaye
kṛṣṇa-sambandha-vijñāna-dāyine prabhave namaḥ

mādhuryojjvala-premāḍhya-śrī-rūpānuga-bhaktida
śrī-gaura-karuṇā-śakti-vigrahāya namo 'stu te

namas te gaura-vāṇī-śrī-mūrtaye dīna-tāriṇe
rūpānuga-viruddhāpasiddhānta-dhvānta-hāriṇe

I salute him who is known in this world as His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, who is of the same status as Lord Viṣṇu and is most dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

I offer homage to him whose eternal identity is Śrī Vārṣabhānavī-devī-dayita (one very dear to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the daughter of Mahārāja Vṛṣabhānu), who is powerful, an ocean of transcendental mercy, and a deliverer of the science of Kṛṣṇa.

O giver of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's treasure of *bhakti,* which is replete with divine love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa! I bow to you, the very form of Lord Caitanya's mercy potency.

I offer homage to you, the manifestation of Lord Caitanya's words, the savior of fallen souls, and the remover of the darkness of incorrect conclusions that oppose the teachings of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

As one who is cherished by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī (*śrī-vārṣabhānavī-devī-dayita*), Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, although appearing in this world (*bhū-tale*) is of the same status as the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu (*viṣṇu-pāda*) and is most dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-preṣṭha*).

Notwithstanding (or characteristic of) his exalted status, he extends himself to and uplifts fallen souls (*dīna-tārī*). Thus he is an ocean of mercy (*kṛpābdhi*) and indeed the very form of Lord Gaurāṅga's mercy potency (*śrī-gaura-karuṇā-śakti-vigraha*). His distribution of Lord Caitanya's mercy is particularly via the medium of His message, of which he is the divine manifestation (*gaura-vāṇī-śrī-mūrti*).

Lord Gaurāṅga came to give the most sublime and radiant mellow of devotional service in divine love (*unnatojjvala-rasa*), which Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī distributes in the line following Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī (*mādhuryojjvala-premāḍhya-śrī-rūpānuga-bhaktida*), who presented the kernel of Lord Caitanya's teachings by defining *śuddha-bhakti* as favorable devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, devoid of any trace of personal desire (*anyābhilāṣitā-śūnya*).[*] To differentiate and protect *śuddha-bhakti* from various prevalent vitiated forms that claimed the stewardship of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī yet grossly or subtly nourished desires other than to satisfy Kṛṣṇa (*anyābhilāṣa*), Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, as the servant of the best of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's followers (i.e., Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura), removes the darkness of incorrect conclusions that oppose the teachings of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī (*rūpānuga-viruddhāpasiddhānta-dhvānta-hāri*) and is the powerful deliverer (*dāyī prabhu*) of genuine knowledge of *śuddha-bhakti,* beginning with the science of one's relationship with Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-sambandha-vijñāna*), which leads to practical devotional service (*abhidheya*) and the ultimate goal (*prayojana*): sweet resplendent love of Kṛṣṇa (*mādhuryojjvala-prema*).[†]

namo gaura-kiśorāya sākṣād-vairāgya-mūrtaye
vipralambha-rasāmbhode pādāmbujāya te namaḥ

I offer homage to Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī, who is the very form of renunciation and the ocean of the mellow of separation from Kṛṣṇa.

namo bhaktivinodāya sac-cid-ānanda-nāmine
gaura-śakti-svarūpāya rūpānuga-varāya te

I offer homage to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who is named Saccidānanda, is the very form of Mahāprabhu's internal potency, and is the best follower of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

gaurāvirbhāva-bhūmes tvaṁ nirdeṣṭā sajjana-priyaḥ
vaiṣṇava-sārvabhaumaḥ śrī-jagannāthāya te namaḥ

I offer homage to Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī, who ascertained Lord Caitanya's appearance place, is dear to the virtuous, and is the leader of the Vaiṣṇavas.

granthera ārambhe kari 'maṅgalācaraṇa'
guru, vaiṣṇava, bhagavān,—tinera smaraṇa

tinera smaraṇe haya vighna-vināśana
anāyāse haya nija vāñchita-pūraṇa

At the beginning of this book I invoke auspiciousness by remembering the guru, the Vaiṣṇavas, and Bhagavān, by remembrance of whom all obstacles are destroyed, and personal desires easily fulfilled.[1]

Author's Submission

mūrkha, nīca, kṣudra muñi viṣaya-lālasa
vaiṣṇavājñā-bale kari eteka sāhasa

I am foolish, lowborn, and insignificant, and I always desire material enjoyment; yet by the order of the Vaiṣṇavas I am bold enough to write this book. (Cc 1.8.83)

It is practically a joke that such a minuscule insect as myself would dare to write about Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. I am far inferior to a piece of dust that has only once touched his divine lotus feet.* After more than thirty years of making a show of devotional service, I remain plodding in a rut of loathsome material desires. Finding myself in such an abominable condition, I have concluded that my only hope for elevation is the mercy of the *ācāryas,* especially that of my initiating spiritual master and savior His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness and the representative of all previous *ācāryas*, without whose unprecedented and inimitable endeavor the vast majority of readers of this book could never have heard of Oṁ Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda. It is through His Divine Grace that not only someone as nondescript as I, but almost everyone else in the universe, can be connected to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and through him to the *paramparā,* on up to Lord Caitanya and Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Placing upon my head the dust of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's lotus feet, and taking hope in his being *adhama janāra bandhu* (friend of the low) and *dīna-tārī* (uplifter of wretched souls), I have undertaken the inditement of this book as an act of worship and self-purification. I resemble the proverbial dwarf trying to catch the moon, since much that I have collected and recorded is beyond my comprehension. Still, just as the holy Sarasvatī River is worshiped with simple offerings of her own water, through this composition I worship Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. I offer this work to him through his most prominent disciple, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. By their mercy I have been engaged in this project, which I pray they be satisfied with, and also beseech that they bless my feeble attempts to serve within their preaching mission.

Preface

From my initial days in devotional life I was fascinated by the personality of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. I often reflected on the painting of him in the ISKCON temple at Bury Place, London, his serious gaze as if descending directly from Goloka Vṛndāvana. He was known as a lionlike guru for his power in combating nondevotional theories. Who would not be impressed by his erudition, strictness, austerity, fearless dedication to truth, unflinching devotion to the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and unveering preaching of Their glories?

Our own spiritual master, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, another empowered *ācārya,* through his unbreakable bond of devotion to his *gurudeva* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, has linked us eternally to him and the entire *paramparā*.

There is no intrinsic difference between the teachings of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and those of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Considering this, and that *bhaktivedānta-vāṇī* is perfect and complete, one may question the necessity of studying *bhaktisiddhānta-vāṇī.* In reply, we should understand the principle that the guru is one yet manifests in multiple forms, each a distinct individual with a specific and unique contribution. All *ācāryas* deliver the same message, but with differing style and emphasis. No guru is self-made, but is dependent on and to be understood in terms of the *paramparā* he represents. Without clear understanding of these subtle points of guru-*tattva,* no one can be a genuine *śiṣya;* hence, for spiritual progress it is essential to learn in depth and from an authorized source about the character, activities, and teachings of previous *ācāryas.*

Typical of a bona fide guru, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda never took credit for his achievements, but attributed them to the blessings of his own guru-*mahārāja.* Devotees who worship those achievements will naturally be eager to know of the extraordinarily empowered sadhu who gave rise to another *ācārya* as significant as His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who repeatedly pointed out that it is not sufficient simply to believe that God is great—one must know *how* He is great. Similarly, a sincere disciple should not merely accept as axiomatic that his guru is exalted, but should strive to comprehend how he is so, by reverently studying his instructions and behavior.

Whatever a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa does and says is invaluable for conditioned souls trying to follow in his footsteps.* This is especially true of those special *ācāryas* who come to this plane specifically to uplift fallen souls. Thus in the course of preaching duties in Bengal during the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, I relished several opportunities to hear stories and teachings of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura from some of his direct disciples and granddisciples. Gleaning here and there gems of information about our *parama*-guru, my heart filled with wonder and pride at being connected to such a towering transcendental luminary, and my eagerness to learn more about him increased. Realizing that numerous valuable pastimes and instructions of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura could be systematically

collected from his remaining disciples, I sometimes contemplated doing so. But as an insignificant member of the devotee community, I felt it would be presumptuous to attempt such an important endeavor that would entail approaching many senior Vaiṣṇavas.

Yet toward the end of 1985, having gradually built up courage and considering that no one else was likely to undertake this task, I set out to meet the few disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī still present in the world. (Unfortunately, before I was able to meet Śrīmad B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja, who might have revealed oceans of nectarean events, he had become indisposed and was hardly speaking; and then he passed away.) Initially I visited different ashrams of the Gauḍīya Maṭha diaspora and met a few elderly sannyasis and *brahmacārīs*. The quest for Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's householder disciples led me to many places in Bengal, Orissa, and Vṛndāvana, including some remote spots and dead ends. Although eventually I found the whereabouts of most of the few remaining disciples, many of them either did not take me seriously, or having had minimal association with Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, had little to say. Others were happy to meet me but seemed unable to focus on the topic for which I had approached them.

Having gathered smatters of information, by good fortune I was advised by a devotee to meet Śrīpāda Jati Śekhara Prabhu, who had joined the Gauḍīya Maṭha in 1926 as a *brahmacārī* and who frequently saw and heard much from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. After the breakup of his guru's institution, Jati Śekhara Prabhu withdrew to live as a householder.

During several visits of a few days each, as we sat together on the floor of the tiny thatched-roof temple at his home in Cuttack, Orissa, Jati Śekhara Prabhu revealed dozens of stories about Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. He told me, "You are like a train, and I have the goods. You will take the goods to the destination. For many years I was carrying these memories of my guru-*mahārāja.* Sometimes I recalled them, yet being engaged in family affairs I was mostly forgetting them. But now that you have come, these things will not be lost—they will be revealed to the world." Reflecting the love he had received from his *gurudeva,* Jati Śekhara Prabhu was kind to me. He appreciated his godbrother A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami's contribution in spreading their guru's mission, but as a lifelong supporter of Śrī Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu (later known as Śrī Bhakti Prasāda Purī Gosvāmī and then as Śrī Purīdāsa) and Śrīmad B.K. Auḍulomi Mahārāja, both controversial figures in Gauḍīya Maṭha history, he maintained distinct differences of opinion regarding certain things that His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda had done. While Jati Śekhara Prabhu and I could not agree on everything, we met on the happy ground of jointly glorifying Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to the world, and thus developed a relationship of mutual respect and affection.

My original intention was simply to compile unpublished anecdotes of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, but ultimately I decided to give a more composite overview of his activities, achievements, and teachings. Hence I chose to also present his biography and some of his philosophical explanations, essays, and discourses, and to include already told vignettes well worth repeating. This led me to consult available literature by and about Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta

Sarasvatī, especially the diverse biographical works in Bengali and English, as well as his extant letters and abstracts of lectures and conversations. From *Sarasvatī-jayaśrī,* an anthology of disciples' recollections that was first printed in 1935, I culled dozens of anecdota never before published in English. Although unsystematic and documenting only from 1911 to 1925, *Sarasvatī-jayaśrī* is the most authoritative contemporary work about Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, from which all subsequent biographies have directly or indirectly drawn much information.[*] And my previous failure to have interviewed Śrīmad B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja was largely compensated when, some fifteen years after his departure, I gained access to various narratives and insights recorded in transcriptions of conversations with him. Another valuable source for me was the body of statements by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda about his guru-*mahārāja.*

Several times when I thought my task nearly complete, important research material that I was previously unaware of became available to me. Thus the undertaking seemed to assume a life of its own, gradually expanding to an extent I had not imagined upon its commencement. Major input was proffered by a Russian disciple of Śrīpāda Bhakti Pramoda Purī Mahārāja who, on Mahārāja's order, had learned Bengali and spent years collecting and preserving the printed *vāṇī* of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, during which he became closely acquainted with it, and with many orally preserved anecdotes about Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. This devotee (who requested anonymity) graciously spent several weeks with me, combing over the text, providing suggestions, clarifications, relevant material, and photos of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. His contribution significantly meliorated the growing tome.

Since Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's *vaibhava* (grandeur and glory) is principally manifested in his *vilāsa* (pastimes) and *vāṇī* (teachings), *Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava* attempts to give an intimate look at his *vilāsa* through reminiscences of those who lived with him, and to thereby reveal his attributes, character, and achievements, insofar as they may be apprehended by limited sensibility—for a great person is known not only by his achievements and instructions but also by his conduct, his commitment to live by what he professes, and his genuine regard and empathy for others, as manifested at each moment and in every detail of his life. In addition, *Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava* presents drops from the vast and fathomless ocean that constitutes Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's *vāṇī*, which being inseparable from and the very meaning of his *vilāsa,* reveal not only his extraordinary intellectual depth, but even more, the magnitude of his transcendental personality. And because that personality is saturated with and nondifferent from *bhakti-vinoda, Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava* necessarily also provides some insights and anecdotes illuminating the renown of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

Readers eager for what they consider nectar, and thus inclined to hear only stories and not philosophy, are urged not to skim through the specifically philosophical sections of this book, for without *bhakti-siddhānta* it is impossible even to begin to appreciate the qualities and activities of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. As he himself taught, although *vāṇī* and *vapu* are inseparable, *vāṇī* is more important than vision through materially formed eyes; *vapu* can be understood through *vāṇī,* but not vice versa.[1] His very name being expressive of philosophical

instruction, to neglect or pooh-pooh the *vāṇī* that is the essence of his being is necessarily a disservice and offense to him. Actual benefit will accrue to those who peruse the entire contents thoughtfully and prayerfully, with faith that imbibing his message will lead to the summit of spiritual perfection.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's numerous unique, divinely inspired, and amazingly perspicacious philosophical insights were typically presented in a Bengali so turgid and difficult to satisfactorily translate, that in their pristine form they are accessible only to those few adepts possessing sufficient linguistic, cerebral, and devotional qualifications. Therefore nearly all seekers in subsequent generations will better approach the legacy of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura via the simplified yet no less spiritually potent expositions of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Indeed, for persons with little grounding in those teachings, many of the topics in *Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava* will likely be incomprehensible. This book is not for beginners.

Inevitably, not all readers will accept Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī as he is. Even a number of his professed discipular descendants will approach his *vāṇī* with "half-hen" logic, to ignore, minimize, or redefine whatever does not appeal to their own sense gratificatory notions of *bhakti*.[*] Yet *Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava* was written principally for the elucidation of purified men who are thoroughly honest, in other words, devotees sincerely aspiring to follow in toto the sacred path shown by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.[2] Loving devotees who hold *bhakti-siddhānta* in their hearts will comprehend these topics, which are always pleasing to Vaiṣṇavas. Genuine *bhaktas* become blissful by hearing them, whereas camel-like nondevotees and pseudo-devotees cannot enter into these matters. And if such persons do not understand, then what in all the three worlds could be more satisfying?[3]

Presumably *Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava* will be of interest also to secular students of religion, particularly those specializing in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. However, notwithstanding their scrupulous standards of research and exegesis and their laboriously acquired accumulation of facts and figures, such external inquirers are by their very outlook disqualified from inner appreciation of Vaiṣṇavas and Vaiṣṇavism; for the neutrality and aloofness that purportedly define the academic position are self-defeating in the realm of spirituality, where commitment alone is the key. Indeed, that such a monumental *ācārya* as Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī has to date been largely overlooked by academicians specializing in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism bears testimony to their committed mundaneness and resultant inability to recognize the essential.[*]

> *acintyāḥ khalu ye bhāvā na tāṁs tarkeṇa yojayet*
> *prakṛtibhyaḥ paraṁ yac ca tad acintyasya lakṣaṇam*
>
> Whatever is beyond material nature is thus inconceivable to persons within it, and cannot be grasped through mundane reasoning. (*Mahābhārata, Bhīṣma-parva* 5.22)

The endeavor of small-minded scholars to classify Vaiṣṇavas according to psychological or sociological criteria, as if like ordinary mortals Vaiṣṇavas are primarily products of their

environment, volitionally denies the spiritual dimension that empowers devotees. Certainly, to subject Vaiṣṇavas to analytic methods born of partial experience and imperfect conceptions is from the outset preposterous and offensive. Those who consider transcendental personages to be objects of empiric study, ipso facto can never understand them. Only they who seek mercy from such great souls may be blessed with comprehension of their glories. In the words of Professor N.K. Sanyal, a prominent disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī:

> The empiric historian, with his geographical and chronological apparatus of observation, can have really no proper idea of the grotesque anomaly that he unconsciously perpetrates by his pedantic effort to gauze [*sic*] the absolute by the standard supplied to her victim by His deluding energy in the form of the mundane categories that can only limit and define them, whereas the function to be performed is to get rid of the necessity to do either. The empiric consciousness is not in the absolute consciousness at all. It can only bungle and commit a deliberate blunder by attempting to limit and define the immeasurable under the pleas of a necessity that need not be supposed to exist at all. By the empiric attitude one is led to launch out on the quest of the absolute truth with the resources of admittedly utter ignorance. This foolhardiness must be made to cease. The method of submissive inquiry enjoined by the scriptures should be substituted after being properly learnt by those who have themselves attained to the right knowledge of the same by the right method of submission.[4]

To exoteric vision, great *ācāryas* resemble common men, inasmuch as they walk, talk, eat, travel, undergo sickness, and in many other ways seem like anyone else. But a devotee's existence is quite distinct from that of a conditioned soul. Just as each thought, word, and deed of ordinary persons is impelled by the deluding influence of the material energy, the movements of pure devotees are conducted by the Supreme Lord's *līlā-śakti* (internal potency). Thus like Kṛṣṇa Himself, pure devotees who come to this world are never really part of it:

> *etad īśanam īśasya prakṛti-stho 'pi tad-guṇaiḥ*
> *na yujyate sadātma-sthair yathā buddhis tad-āśrayā*
>
> This is the divinity of the Personality of Godhead: He is not affected by the qualities of material nature even though in contact with them. Similarly, devotees who have taken shelter of the Lord are never influenced by mundane qualities. (SB 1.11.38)

Unlike conditioned souls ever enmeshed in *māyā,* pure devotees remain perpetually immersed in intense love for Kṛṣṇa, thus infusing each moment of even their seemingly routine affairs with the ecstasy of their hearts' craving for Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is the life of His devotees, and a devotee lives only to serve his beloved Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. A Vaiṣṇava is fully engaged in that service even before his apparent birth, and upon leaving the plane of mortal vision he returns to the realm of eternal service. Hence a Vaiṣṇava's life and activities are clearly distinct from those of ordinary people, which have a discernable beginning and end and may be considered a product of their contemporary historical and sociological ethos. A Vaiṣṇava is not limited by time nor conditioned by his terrestrial surroundings, because in all times and all places he

remains absorbed in wholly spiritual service to Kṛṣṇa, beyond the constrictive vector of mundane time and space. Hence, reference to a Vaiṣṇava's "life" should be understood to indicate his transcendental existence manifested within the plane of temporal existence. Eternally perfect Vaiṣṇavas appear in human society solely to bring others back to the immortal abode, which they themselves keenly hanker for in separation. By their causeless mercy they infuse devotion into the hearts of those who have neglected Kṛṣṇa since time immemorial. Accordingly, even though a *nitya-siddha mahā-bhāgavata* like Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī may appear to transit through various phases of spiritual development or be tutored in the principles of *bhakti,* enlightened thinkers accept that even before being formally instructed, a liberated soul is never bereft of knowledge of Kṛṣṇa, and indeed is so enriched by such realization as to be empowered to similarly enrich others.

The character and activities of such exalted devotees can be appreciated only from the plane of divinity, which they represent and to which they beckon us, and will remain ever inexplicable to persons unwilling to embrace the spirit of their teachings. Such outsiders are warned not to equate the transcendental actions, moods, and emotions of redoubtable devotees with the counterpart expressions of common men. Mature students of Vaiṣṇava theology know well that the anger, disappointment, and other apparently less desirable traits of a *mahā-bhāgavata* are as much spotless manifestations of his unsullied attachment to Kṛṣṇa as are his renunciation, tranquility, modesty, and other such qualities considered exclusively adorable by persons ignorant of transcendental reality. This point is repeatedly elaborated in the biographies of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, wherein simpletons are cautioned not to ascribe imperfection to unimpeachable saints who are beyond their scope of ideation:

> *yāṅra citte kṛṣṇa-premā karaye udaya*
> *tāṅra vākya, kriyā, mudrā vijñeha nā bujhaya*
>
> Even the most learned man cannot comprehend the words, activities, and symptoms of one situated in love of Godhead. (Cc 2.23.39)

As Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī elucidated: "Although to external vision the activities of a devotee and the mischievousness of a pseudo-devotee may appear the same, there is a gulf of difference between them, like that between milk and a mixture of limestone and water. Worldly people cannot understand devotees. If they could understand they would become renounced like the devotees—but that they do not want."

Even the seeming sickness and other apparent adversities undergone by *mahā-bhāgavatas* must be accepted as *līlā* and not misconstrued as equivalent to the karmic sufferings of conditioned souls. As Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura often quoted:

> *yata dekha vaiṣṇavera vyavahāra duḥkha*
> *niścaya jāniha sei parānanda-sukha*
>
> *viṣaya-madāndha saba kichui nā jāne*

vidyā-made dhana-made vaiṣṇava nā cine

Be convinced that distress seen in a Vaiṣṇava is actually the happiness of spiritual bliss. Persons blind and intoxicated with sense pleasures know nothing of this. In the pride of knowledge and wealth they fail to recognize a Vaiṣṇava. (Cb 2.9.240–41)

And he explained:

Pure devotees are never forced to experience the fruits of their karma. All their pastimes, such as taking birth, are enacted simply by the Lord's will. But it is often seen that devotees appear in low-class families, or to ordinary eyes seem like fools or to be afflicted with disease.* There is a great purpose behind this: if people were to detect that the Lord's devotees appear only in high-class families and are always strong, healthy, and well educated according to material calculation, they would become discouraged.[5]

As evidenced from their mutual correspondence, the compilers of *Sarasvatī-jayaśrī* took much care to describe their *gurudeva* in a manner meant to prevent readers from being influenced by *martya-buddhi,* the misunderstanding that a transcendentally situated devotee is subject to the defects of ordinary mortals. Indeed, even to describe Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī as a lionlike guru or *śaktyāveśa-avatāra,* while not incorrect, is incomplete. As he himself revealed, the guru is to be considered either a confidante (*priya-sakhī*) of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī or a manifested representation of Śrīla Nityānanda Prabhu.[6] Certain disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura detected that in the eternal pastimes of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa he is Nayana-maṇi Mañjarī, a young girl assistant of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and the personification of Her gazing at Kṛṣṇa.* Such intimate devotees of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī do not belong to this world, nor can they be fathomed by the feeble methodologies that it spawns. Only from the plane of the absolute, which Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī represented and directed others to, can one at least somewhat comprehend his glories.

Even though a great Vaiṣṇava preacher may live among ordinary beings, he is nonetheless always above them, and perhaps very few will truly appreciate him. Within a day of Brahmā, but one or two pure devotees of the stature of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura might appear in this universe. To gain the association of such an extraordinarily exalted mahatma is more valuable and pleasing than completing millions of pilgrimages, studying millions of *śāstras,* or assiduously following *śāstrīya* prescriptions for millions of years. Yet even among pious souls dedicated to reciting, studying, and living according to authorized scripture, or among those extremely fortunate souls counted as disciples of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, hardly a few persons could truly recognize the value of such association.[7]

The almost unlimited gap between such illustrious souls and ourselves may be bridged only by their mercy, which they bestow upon those sincerely desiring to receive it. The magnitude of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's remarkable character, as chronicled herein, stands as testimony and warning to devotees in subsequent generations that the role of guru is not a matter of razzmatazz, but may be properly conducted only by faithfully following (*anusaraṇa*)

in the footsteps of genuinely liberated devotees, and not by attempting to imitate (*anukaraṇa*) their anyway inimitable behavior and achievements.

The lives of *mahā-bhāgavata* Vaiṣṇavas are full of magnificent transcendental activities in service to Lord Kṛṣṇa; their every moment is replete with profound meaning. How much can be recorded? How much can be preserved? And how much is our ability to appreciate? Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī writes:

> *gaura-līlāmṛta-sindhu—apāra agādha*
> *ke karite pāre tāhāṅ avagāha-sādha*
>
> *tāhāra mādhurya-gandhe lubdha haya mana*
> *ataeva taṭe rahi' cāki eka kaṇa*
>
> The ocean of the pastimes of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu is immeasurable and unfathomable. Who is able to bathe therein? Its sweetness and fragrance attract my mind. Therefore I stand on its shore and taste but a drop of it. (Cc 1.12.94–95)

Unfortunately, many instructive pastimes of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura are now irrecoverably lost.[*] And not only did he himself perform innumerable wonderful activities, but so also did the transcendental warriors he recruited, trained, and inducted into the preaching arena. Had all the adventures of each of his acolytes been recorded, it would have filled countless volumes. *Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava* comprises just a tiny nugget from the vast treasure of the pastimes of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and his associates, and a mere glimpse of his teachings, yet it is our humble attempt to conserve and present at least a fragment of that important legacy.[†]

Notwithstanding its inevitable faults, I am confident that this book will be interesting and enlivening to most readers. And more importantly, as Jati Śekhara Prabhu noted, it will give valuable instructions to practitioners and preachers of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, by providing edifying anecdotes and realizations as well as intimate insights into guru-disciple relationships and other crucial facets of devotional life, all of which could help even mature and experienced devotees delve further into the intricacies of *bhakti-siddhānta* and deepen their understanding of the roots of the current worldwide *bhakti* movement.

Furthermore, *Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava* should fill a lacuna in knowledge of our heritage; for instance, prior to its publication, many senior and well-read members of ISKCON were unfamiliar with even the name of Śrī Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī stated that *Sarasvatī-jayaśrī* was so abundant in factual examples and anecdotes that reading it would bestow a result unattainable even by studying many *śāstras* for many years.[§] Hence I pray that this volume, being similarly rich with Bhaktisiddhānta-*vaibhava,* by his mercy will bestow similar benediction on its readers. It particularly aims to better acquaint his disciplular descendants with knowledge of what he gave

and how he gave it, with the hope that they preserve and not dilute or pollute his essential gifts, and that by being better equipped to serve his mission, they will spread his message throughout the globe and thereby obtain his blessings.

Collecting materials for and weaving the tapestry that comprises this presentation has been a prolonged learning experience affording an ever increasingly profound meditation on the divine qualities of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and the numerous great souls who gathered round him. Notwithstanding my failings, I pray at the lotus feet of my *parama-gurudeva* that he be pleased to appear in these pages, his splendrous attributes shining through. I pray that the readers' regard for him be similarly enhanced, and that they become inspired to follow in his divine footsteps by adopting his unswerving mood of sacrificing everything for Kṛṣṇa. May his dynamic spirit energize us, and his purity sustain and nourish us.

Apologia

Within *Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava* I have incorporated limited descriptions of the underlying strife in the Gauḍīya Maṭha prior to the departure of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. Yet despite being requested by several devotees, I have not depicted the bedlam that later overtook the Gauḍīya Maṭha.

The general events are well known. Shortly after the passing of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, the internecine war he had foretold broke out and shredded the institution he had worked so hard to establish. A *Gauḍīya* essay published four years after his *tirobhāva* stated that throughout the entire annals of the earth, such enmity as was then being shown to Vaiṣṇavas had never been heard of anywhere, let alone actually manifest against anyone.[1] The task of restoring the dignity of the *sampradāya,* an undertaking Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had so ably continued after the departure of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, became largely undone, for the tremendous esteem earned from the populace quickly evaporated as they beheld sadhus openly and viciously contesting for power and property. The true spirit of the Gauḍīya Maṭha became clouded for many years by accusations and counteraccusations, factionalism, litigation, scission, violence, and reportedly even murder. Some devotees were jailed. And the printing press, so dear to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's heart, was sold to finance subsequent court battles.

Yet the minutiae of that saga are unknown to virtually all contemporary recipients of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's genuine legacy. And due to the complexity of the subject, preponderance of misinformation, and dearth of reliable first-hand evidence, it is unlikely that any fully authentic detailed account will ever manifest. Descriptions of the post-1936 Gauḍīya Maṭha imbroglio are fraught with inaccuracies and sectarian tendentiousness, the admirers and detractors of sundry Gauḍīya Maṭha personages relating impossibly contradictory versions of those individuals' activities. Present-day discipular descendants of some of the most maligned associates of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī insist that their respective gurus have been misrepresented and misunderstood—which is tenable, for the exalted devotional qualities of certain of those descendants indicate that their gurus were not lacking spiritual substance. Moreover, that a number of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's disciples apparently performed acts unbecoming of Vaiṣṇavas is not an indictment of His Divine Grace, who is glorious for having given diverse people the opportunity to perform devotional service. Factually, one way or another practically all his disciples remained in Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout their lives, and some clearly attained high levels of realization.[*]

It is also questionable whether our own guru, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, would approve of explicit documentation of his godbrothers' purported wrongdoings. For while he often ascribed the coarsest motivations to some of his godbrothers, nevertheless he also sometimes praised them. And even though undeniably some unhappy incidents were occasioned by various Gauḍīya Maṭha members, uncensored broadcasting of such disagreeable information would naturally miff their present followers and likely exacerbate the still vitiated atmosphere within the Vaiṣṇava world, which is not at all my intention.

Besides, it could implicate me in offenses to devotees who likely are now in Kṛṣṇa's transcendental abode. Even if the record of Gauḍīya Maṭha infighting could be accurately circumstantiated, publicizing it would hardly serve the cause of Vaiṣṇavism. And while to this day the Gauḍīya Maṭha remains irreparably dismembered, the animosity has significantly dissipated. So why inflame the rancor of the past? Perhaps it was with this consideration that in most biographies of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī even allusions to the hostility that precipitated the later splintering of his institution have been expunged.

In that vein, I was requested by Śrīmad Bhakti Śobhana Śānta Mahārāja to expurgate all historical information that might lead readers to directly or indirectly develop a critical, and therefore offensive, mentality toward devotees worshipable by subsequent generations of followers.[†] Mahārāja stated that the risk of seeking historical correctness is unjustified if in so doing our gurus are even slightly roiled. He opined:

> In remembering devotees, protection of the pure *siddhānta* and divinity of our *paramparā* is more important than preservation of mere chronicled facts; it is a disservice to spread any information that even remotely suggests that previous devotees of our line were in any way questionable regarding their devotion or spiritual stature. Even though there might have been some occasional disagreements between them, it is not our business to analyze such matters. Whatever they may have done or said, we must consider them perfect and worshipable because they are situated at Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's lotus feet. Indeed, the less such controversial and potentially dangerous matters are quoted and discussed, the more peace and stability this would bring to Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava society and to the devotional lives of its members.

I replied that to withhold information of certain less relishable activities performed by disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī might serve an apparently noble purpose but would simultaneously obscure significant aspects of reality from which important lessons can be derived. Later I further ruminated that for our elucidation Śrīla Vedavyāsa did not refrain from disclosing some seemingly abominable acts of personages as venerable as Brahmā and Bṛhaspati, or of the self-destruction of the Yadu dynasty (comparable to the Gauḍīya Maṭha brouhaha), despite the possibility that such narrations would be difficult for some to digest—particularly novices, whose fragile faith is easily shattered—and could spark envious detractors to attack the very validity of Hari-*bhakti.* Besides, my own guru-*mahārāja* thought the disintegration of the Gauḍīya Maṭha important enough to explicitly mention it in his books, to which he ascribed the highest authority. If he deemed to criticize anyone, surely it was not without reason. Although some argue that his barbs about particular godbrothers were meant for a specific time and circumstance that is now moot, I surmise that he did not want the history of the Gauḍīya Maṭha to be idealized almost to the point of fiction.

Anyone who joins the Sārasvata *paramparā* will before long learn that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's institution became divided and subdivided by internal conflict, with the resulting diaspora remaining factious and fissiparous. We might better serve our *ācāryas* by

acknowledging and accommodating such unpalatable facts rather than dressing them as *līlā* or pretending that they never happened. One way or another, newcomers soon learn not only of our hardly flawless past, but also of present-day misadventures. So perhaps it is circumspect to train beginners to adjust to experiential reality without losing faith in the essence and ideal, just as many devotees continue to serve in an ISKCON whose downsides and failings are not only obvious but widely broadcast to the world. To pretend that anomalies cannot occur within Vaiṣṇava society would be an injustice to truth.

Notwithstanding that Vaiṣṇava culture prescribes deep respect for elders, if applied blindly or merely euphemistically such protocol is surely unrealistic and impractical, even when directed toward otherwise worshipable superiors. Thus I decided to summarily and guardedly mention a few seemingly less-becoming aspects of the pre-1937 Gauḍīya Maṭha. Yet I thank Śrīmad Śānta Mahārāja for his observations and devotional insights, which prompted me to review and revise this manuscript to maintain a reserved tenor in deference to my spiritual uncles, and in hope of avoiding endless muckraking, to withhold names in descriptions of several less-toward incidents, especially those concerning devotees who later accepted disciples, since their discipular descendants would undoubtedly be sorrowed by such narratives. Let us survey with prudence, not prudishness, sensitive or paradoxical topics concerning Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and his associates, bearing in mind that a guru's censure, or even ostracism, of certain disciples does not necessarily mean they are no longer recipients of his mercy. Even if some of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's disciples are perceived as deviated, their having been once favored by him was surely not in vain, nor are their subordinates justified to harp on such criticism.

Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava also touches on several embroilments stemming from Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's disdain of other Vaiṣṇavas, albeit some contemporary devotees similarly opine that such details should not be publicized. But withal, I chose to discuss these controversial issues because they are valuable for understanding the ethos surrounding Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and are instructive signposts in tackling contentious ecclesiastical matters even of today. Nevertheless, disagreements between genuine devotees are of no permanent relevance, and while the Gauḍīya Maṭha may appear to have been merely another religious movement that first dazzled and then fizzled, the really important history of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and the Gauḍīya Maṭha is the undying spiritual contribution they gave to the world. Hence, although compiling of history, especially recent events, is typically fraught with political slant, I have essayed to do so with solely devotional considerations.

Not every reader will like everything written herein. Indeed to compose a factual biography of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī that all would fully approve is probably not possible. I have tried to present his pastimes in a manner both devotional and congruent with history, and have provided extensive quotations with references to enable crosschecking against original sources. Still, this book may be considered hagiography rather than impartial study, for its principal purpose is not scholastic exactitude, but to convey the instructions and mood of an *ācārya* for the benefit of devotees aspiring to follow in his footsteps. I do not pretend to be neutral (who

can be, especially in matters sacred?), and have written not from a supposedly nonjudgmental etic standpoint, but as a decidely emic discipular follower of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and more specifically as a disciple of his foremost disciple, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, according to the values they inculcated: pure devotional service to Kṛṣṇa is absolute and perfect; all else is imperfect and indeed condemnable. In many cases, my apparent criticism of others is not merely echoing that of my *ācāryas* but is directly extracted from original sources. Nevertheless, some will object that I have been unduly harsh, and perhaps others will protest that I was overly mild. *Sarva-citta nāri ārādhite:* "For me to satisfy everyone is not possible." (Cc 2.2.85)

Bowing my head at the lotus feet of all devotees, I beg their lenity and forgiveness for any offenses I have made while undertaking this difficult task. May the *sāragrāhī* Vaiṣṇavas accept the essence of this work and overlook its faults.

> *sarva vaiṣṇavera pā'ye kari namaskāra*
> *ithe aparādha kichu nahuka āmāra*
>
> I offer homage at the feet of all Vaiṣṇavas so that I may not commit any offenses to them.[2]

Editorial Notes

Often recent events are reported differently by individual witnesses and thus only well-organized and expert investigation can verify the actual details of such recollections. So what to speak of matters that occurred over seventy years before, especially if received second- or third-hand or even further removed? Even the best-researched historical portrayals are necessarily simplifications and approximations of complex events and exchanges and hence are liable to contain errors. "The empiric historical method always apprehends *(sic)* the possibility of erroneous observation of an occurrence even on the part of an actual and careful observer."[1] It is the bane of hagiology, and perhaps of all historiography, that exaggeration, interpolation, myth, personal angles, prejudices, confabulations, and calculated distortions tend to merge with or supplant facts. This is particularly so regarding some of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's disciples, about whom various controversies have led to widely differing reportage of their activities—which I became obligated to attempt to reconcile. Then again, it is not unusual that in people's memories, and thus also in biographical accounts, particulars of discrete individuals become intermixed, whereby similarities in certain sadhus' lives lead to anecdotes of one being ascribed to another. Several times disciples of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura guilelessly narrated to me anecdotes about him that they stated to have personally witnessed but that I later discovered to be about various of his sannyasi disciples.

Similarly, dates of several incidents involving Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, especially those from his early life, are recorded variously, sometimes with considerable disparity. Hence, in preparing this book I was sometimes faced with tangles of contradictions and chronological impossibilities, and therefore was obliged to exercise discretion in choosing what to include or to reject as improbable, retaining only that which seemed most authorized, appropriate, and in consonance with the character of this extraordinary guru.[*]

Naturally, I generally accorded greater legitimacy to old printed records than to recent or oral sources. Especially all that was printed during Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's manifest presence is particularly valuable due to being enriched by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's characteristically deep philosophical explanations, the details of which his contemporary biographers were mindful to record. Given that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī paid keen attention to his disciples' writings (mostly published in magazines), and that the writers and producers of his magazines were highly qualified and faithful to Bhaktisiddhānta-*vāṇī,* and that many articles were drafted at Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's specific behest or directly based on his *kathā,* I have accorded authoritativeness to such writings as if they had been composed by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī himself. However, even old published documentation can be inaccurate or incomplete, to the extent that apparently some entire noteworthy incidents in Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's life were hitherto deliberately never featured in print.[*]

Nonetheless, the nigh inevitability of errors and inconsistencies in recorded anecdotes does not necessarily invalidate them. As His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda said to an artist disciple who was minutely questioning him about a scene described in his books:

“We are not archaeologists.” The same principle applies to this endeavor; we are not historians in the academic sense.

Still, having had this manuscript thoroughly reviewed by two scholarly devotees conversant with the history of the Gauḍīya Maṭha and the teachings of its founder, I am confident that the reportage is free of gaffs—although at the time of publishing, a few points remained unresolved, and references to some cited text were still unfound.* Hopefully any discrepancies will eventually be corrected through further perusal, by myself or others, of the magazines produced by the Gauḍīya Mission during the manifest presence of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī—although unfortunately that vast trove is nowadays largely unread by and unknown even to most of his discipular followers.

As was obviously done by devotees from whom anecdotes were culled, occasionally I too paraphrased or added explanatory words into recorded speech to elucidate the speaker's intent. And in a few cases of incomplete or unclear evidence, I ventured to extrapolate the apparent meaning, without introducing yarns befitting a biographical novel.

Because the terrestrial activities of even transcendentally situated persons must be considered in relation to the milieus in which they appear and interact, this book offers asides on customs, practices, and attitudes within traditional Hindu society, and on religious, social, and political trends, especially in Bengal, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While many of these cultural traits remain extant today, herein they are discussed in the past tense, and because of the limited compass of this work they should be taken as generalizations. In researching these topics, I consulted some secular academic sources, despite being wary of their prevalent anti-devotional tilt. And since Bengali and Oriya culture are cognate, what is stated about the culture of Bengal may be understood as broadly applicable also to that of Orissa.

I have treated philosophical and polemic issues only summarily, for comprehensive analysis would necessitate supplementary volumes. The coverage of diverse *apa-sampradāyas* not only underscores Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's mordant opposition to them, but additionally provides pertinent insights into perennial deviations within the Vaiṣṇava world. Yet, being a summary, it is far from a definitive delineation of the innumerable varieties and nuances of belief and practice in the *apa-sampradāyas.*

Much of the material presented in this work was derived from spoken or written Bengali. Having undergone inevitable alteration through translation, the English renditions necessarily fail to convey the full flavor and depth of the original; particularly Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's extraordinarily rich, incisive, and forceful language defies satisfactory transposition into English.

From transcriptions of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's speaking, it seems that he often quoted Sanskrit without giving translations, which suggests that his listeners were capable of comprehending those citations. In reproducing such cases I have provided English renditions, anticipating that most readers will need them. Many translations of verses and Śrīla

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's commentaries are from the books of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda or o ther BBT publications, some are from the *Harmonist,* others are redacted from Bengali translations of Sanskrit verses or of commentaries given by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī or his discipular descendants, and some are by myself or my contemporaries.

Some translations from BBT publications have been altered, and other verses or passages that appear in BBT books have been newly translated, either as contextually required or to more closely resemble the translations of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī from which they are derived. Similarly, certain citations of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda's spoken words and letters, some source materials already translated by others from Bengali to English, and sundry other passages from English language sources have been emended for ease of reading and to conform with the overall style of this book. Nonetheless, to preserve and demonstrate their idiom and flavor, most excerpts from the *Harmonist* and other English writings from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's time are presented largely unedited, yet with some revisions of punctuation, addition of diacritical marks and italicization, spelling converted to American English, and lowercasing of many capital words.

Most of the Sanskrit and Bengali words in this book are followed (within parentheses) by English equivalents, and many are further explained in the Glossary. English transliteration of Sanskrit and Bengali script is rendered according to the diacritical system used by BBT, a guide to which is included in the back matter of each volume of *Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava.* In some cases, phonetical adjustments have been made to Sanskrit words used in Bengali—for instance, rendering Vimalā as Bimalā, and Yadumaṇi as Jadumaṇi. Also included in each volume is a Guide to Obscure English Words, to aid readers who are not familiar with the many uncommon words herein, employed to reflect Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's highbrow literary style.

The appendixes include a guide to Bengali months and dates. Generally Gregorian dates are used, but in cases wherein sources quote only the Bengali year, that has been given; since Bengali years straddle the Gregorian, unless the exact month is specified, the corresponding Gregorian year cannot be definitively ascertained.

Herein the term *Vedic* is used in the broad sense employed by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, to indicate the culture, ethos, and literature stemming from and based not only on the four Vedas, but also connate texts, especially the *Purāṇas, Rāmāyaṇa,* and *Mahābhārata.* The term *Vaiṣṇava* is employed contextually, usually denoting a Gauḍīya lineage, or a committed devotee thereof, considered bona fide by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, yet it sometimes indicates any orthodox Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* or a member thereof. It also may refer to the broad social genre in Bengal known as Vaiṣṇava but which, according to Bhaktisiddhānta-*vāṇī,* was considered deviated from *śuddha* Vaiṣṇava dharma. *Brāhmaṇa, guru,* and *sadhu* are other terms used contextually to indicate either genuine, worthy possessors of such titles, or persons merely conventionally accepted as such.

Some excellently written pieces from previous English biographical writings about Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī are blended almost verbatim with the content of this book. Extracts from His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda's writings are copyrighted by The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust International, Inc. Nearly all cited letters of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī are from *Śrīla Prabhupādera Patrāvalī.* To avoid repetition and unnecessary increment of this work, I have not included the many pastimes of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura with his guru that are recorded in the booklet *Babaji Mahārāja: Two Beyond Duality* (*Lives of the Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas,* vol. 3), by Karṇāmṛta Dāsa Adhikārī (New Jaipur Press, 1990).

Diactrical marks are featured in most Indian names, whether of persons or places; non-diacriticized forms are used where considered appropriate. *Goswami* is used in reference to caste Goswamis (and also in some proper names), *gosvāmī* for genuine *gosvāmīs.* Some toponyms are written in the anglicized forms current during the Raj period and are listed in the appendixes with their present equivalents.

In Gauḍīya Maṭha publications, withheld names were denoted by a series of asterisks, and these have been retained in excerpts quoted in this book.

I have employed the unorthodox but readily understandable compounds *birthcaste, birthsite, conchshell, gurushipp,* and *lawbook,* as well as non-hyphenated *nondevotee* and *nondifferent;* and *worshipable.* And while *alright* is still not all right in the estimation of orthographers who decide such matters, I have used it nonetheless.

Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava features many photos taken from Gauḍīya Maṭha publications that were over seventy years old, most of which were hitherto largely unknown to the present Vaiṣṇava world. Several of the captions are direct translations of or derived from the Bengali originals. Photos with no caption either originally had none, or the originals conveyed dubious, irrelevant, or very little information (for instance, just giving the name of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura). Apart from the touch-up of a portrait of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, all of the color photographs featured herein were shot within three years prior to the first printing of this book.

Ebook Edition

With the advent of widely disseminated ebooks, it is inevitable and apt that *Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava* be presented in this format. Surely Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, who always desired that Hari-kathā be broadcast by the most effective media, would have been as enthusiastic about ebooks as he was for utilzation of the printing press.

Nomenclature

As is common in Vedic culture, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had several names and titles. In childhood he was known as Bimalā Prasāda, "he who was received as the mercy of Bimalā-devī."[*] Bimalā-devī is the internal potency of Jagannātha manifested as a form of Durgā in His temple at Purī; Gauḍīyas consider her an expansion of the *gopī* Bimalā, the overseer of Kāmyavana forest of Vraja-*maṇḍala.* Another significance of this name is that Jagannātha's *prasāda* (food remnants) is offered to the deity Bimalā, after which it is called *mahā-prasāda;* only then is it distributed to the public. So just as Jagannātha's *prasāda* (mercy) is available only through Bimalā-devī and is thus received with enhanced quality, the mercy of Jagannātha in the form of *bhakti-siddhānta* and *bhakti-vinoda* is available only from Śrī Bimalā Prasāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.

At age fifteen he was awarded the title Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī for excellence in *jyotiṣa*.[†] In Vedic astronomy, *siddhānta* refers to an established canonical textbook; Sarasvatī is the goddess presiding over *aparā-vidyā* (knowledge, particularly that of *śāstra,* pertaining to the material sphere). Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī lived up to his appellation by demonstrating divinely inspired erudition in defining principles of *jyotiṣa,* even by defying the orthodoxy of that science and shattering its hallowed misconceptions. On another level, the name Siddhānta Sarasvatī indicates a timeless intrinsic attribute of the amaranthine saint whom it adorns, whose excellence lies in explaining *bhakti-siddhānta* (the conclusion of devotional service) rather than *jyotiṣa.* Perhaps those who conferred upon this great sadhu the title Siddhānta Sarasvatī attained a fortune comparable to that of the demigod Agni, who apparently presented to Kṛṣṇa His eternal Sudarśana weapon.

At some point during youth Bimalā Prasāda adopted the name Śrī Vārṣabhānavī-dayita dāsa, "the servant of the lover of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the daughter of Mahārāja Vṛṣabhānu."[*] At least from the late 1890s he used this name in correspondence, yet was still known to most by his other two names.

Shortly after Śrī Bimalā Prasāda's spiritual initiation by Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī in 1901, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura added the word *Bhakti* to the apparently academic title Siddhānta Sarasvatī, who thus was sometimes referred to as Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's conferring the name Bhaktisiddhānta was in accord with the then in-vogue practice among Vaiṣṇavas to bestow titles beginning with Bhakti.[†] "Bhaktisiddhānta" became the norm for addressing Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī when upon taking *sannyāsa* at forty-four he became Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī. The title Bhaktisiddhānta indicates that the summum bonum of all scriptural deliberations is pure devotional service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.[‡] *Siddhānta* refers to the final conclusion of a Vedic doctrine, established on the basis of *śāstra* and in refutation of the theories of other Vedic schools, and Śuddhā Sarasvatī is the presiding goddess of *parā-vidyā* (the spiritual knowledge of *śāstra*), whose blessing is manifest not merely in book learning but in realization, grasp of subtleties, resolution of seeming contradictions and other perplexing points, power of composition, ability to impart learning to

others, and all other facets of a genuinely accomplished scholar.[§] Therefore the prefix *bhakti* revealed the true purport of the name Siddhānta Sarasvatī, for *bhakti* is indeed the ultimate doctrine of Vedic lore, as revealed through the brilliance of Śuddhā Sarasvatī—present as Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, who was unparalleled in knowing and making known *bhakti-siddhānta,* the conclusions of *bhakti.* As Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī pointed out, any activity devoid of *bhakti-siddhānta* is antipathetic to *śuddha-bhakti.*[1] It was with and by the *bhakti-siddhānta* intrinsic to his being that he cut to pieces all *apa-siddhāntas* (false conclusions) and established *śuddha-bhakti-siddhānta.*

Bhakti-siddhānta is also an important term in the Mādhva *sampradāya,* yet from the Gauḍīya perspective its deepest purport is synonymous with that of *rūpānuga*—for Śrī Rūpa is the *rasācārya,* and to please Lord Caitanya *rasa* must be in accord with the *siddhānta* presented by Śrī Rūpa in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu:*

> *'rasābhāsa' haya yadi 'siddhānta-virodha'*
> *sahite nā pāre prabhu, mane haya krodha*
>
> Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu would not tolerate, and would become angry about, presentations in which transcendental mellows overlapped in a manner contrary to the principles of *bhakti-siddhānta.* (Cc 3.5.97)

His nondifference from Sarasvatī was evident in his nonstop Hari-*kathā,* for the goddess Sarasvatī is also known as Vāṇī or Vāk (both meaning "speech" or "message"), and in her *śuddha* manifestation is Hari-*kathā*. Perpetually manifesting on Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's tongue, Śuddhā Sarasvatī empowered his words with the potency and sweetness of the spiritual energy. In an address during a Vyāsa-*pūjā* festival, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura himself indicated his identity with Śuddhā Sarasvatī:

> On *gaura-śuklā-pañcamī,* the fifth day of the bright fortnight of Māgha [the day of Sarasvatī-*pūjā*], children perform worship for the sake of gaining materialistic knowledge, *aparā-vidyā.* And we [Members of the Gauḍīya Maṭha] offer such worship through the hand of Vyāsa to the goddess of spiritual knowledge (*parā-vidyā*) on the fifth day of the dark fortnight of Māgha, *kṛṣṇa-śuklā-pañcamī* [the day of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's Vyāsa-*pūjā*].[2]

To express that he is Sarasvatī manifested as the *vāṇī* of Śrī Caitanya-deva, disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would sometimes refer to him as Gaura Sarasvatī and Caitanya Sarasvatī.[*] That *vāṇī—rūpa-raghunātha-vāṇī, rūpānuga-vāṇī, āmnāya-vāṇī*—is *bhakti-siddhānta*.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī substantiated his name by working intensely to establish unalloyed *bhaktisiddhānta,* countering on multiple fronts innumerable ill-conceived theories of humanity, to confirm the supremacy of actual devotional service as opposed to pseudo-devotional and overtly anti-devotional fallacies and malpractices. This was an important service

to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who felt pain to hear anything against *bhaktisiddhānta:*

> *bhaktisiddhānta-viruddha, āra rasābhāsa*
> *śunite nā haya prabhura cittera ullāsa*
>
> Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was never pleased to hear either statements contradicting *bhaktisiddhānta,* or *rasābhāsa.* (Cc 2.10.113)

And not only was this remarkable devotee known by the name Bhaktisiddhānta, but his form, qualities, activities, mission, genuine associates, and indeed his very being were all fully permeated by and nondifferent from *bhaktisiddhānta.* His sole purpose was to live by and propagate *bhaktisiddhānta,* the ultimate degree of which is comprehendible only to a devotee whose inner identity is Vārṣabhānavī-dayita dāsa.

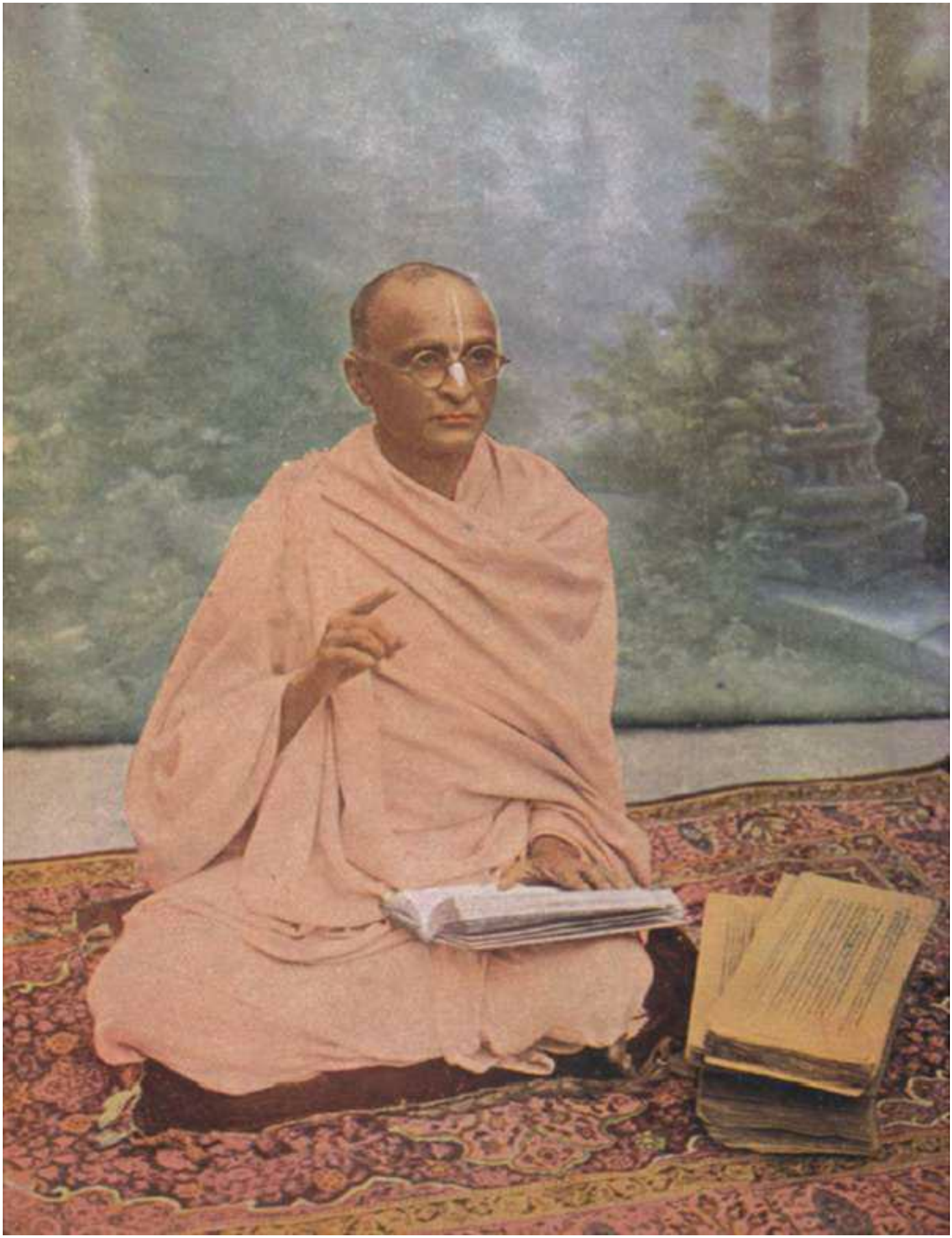
Upon being decorated with the title Prabhupāda in 1924, he was thereafter known as Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda. His disciples usually referred to him as Śrīla Prabhupāda, or less formally simply as Prabhupāda. They also called him Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and chiefly in writing, Śrīla Paramahaṁsa Ṭhākura. In English, both in speech and writing, his name was sometimes preceded by the honorific "His Divine Grace," which also was used alone to refer to him. Throughout his life he mostly signed his name শ্রী সিদ্ধান্ত সরস্বতী ("Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī" in Bengali script); when writing in English after having taken *sannyāsa,* he would sign "Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati."

Although according to former Gauḍīya usage the title Prabhupāda could be used for any *ācārya,* and was commonly attributed to caste Goswamis and others in the role of guru by their respective followers, within the Gauḍīya Maṭha nearly all disciples of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura considered that this term should be solemnly reserved for him alone. Notwithstanding, today his most famous disciple, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, is also known worldwide as Śrīla Prabhupāda. To avoid confusion, in this book Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in his *presannyāsa* period is referred to as Siddhānta Sarasvatī, and in his *postsannyāsa* pastimes as either Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī or Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Only in direct quotations of persons speaking or writing about him is he referred to as Śrīla Prabhupāda. And His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda is primarily identified as such or, in anecdotes prior to his *sannyāsa,* as Abhayadā, the name he was commonly known by at that time.

In accordance with the Vedic cultural standard, especially in formal usage, honorific prefixes have been placed before many personal names. Best known is Śrī, meaning "opulence," "fortune," "beauty," or indicating the goddess Lakṣmī, and in Gauḍīya esotericism, Śrī Rādhā. Śrī may prefix names of males or females, but in modern colloquial Indian languages is normally used only for males. A purely feminine equivalent is Śrīmatī, standard throughout nearly all of India as a prefix to names of married Hindu women, and in Gauḍīya usage, to precede the name of or sometimes used alone as an epithet of Rādhārāṇī. Although Śrī is itself quite acceptable for honoring even the most respected individuals up to the Supreme

Personality of Godhead, several standard variants are employed in this work: Śrī-yuta and Śrī-yukta are common in formal Bengali as honorifics often pertaining to secular rather than spiritual status. Śrīla is used by Gauḍīyas for preeminent *ācāryas* and, particularly within certain branches of the Sārasvata *paramparā,* for one's own guru; while Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was present it was used occasionally to honor at least two of his prominent disciples, but in this book it has been accorded only to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and recognized outstanding Gauḍīya *ācāryas* prevenient to him. Śrīpāda and Śrīmat are used for sannyasis and other exalted devotees; Śrīmat is also rendered Śrīmad or Śrīman, according to Sanskrit grammatical rules—thus, Śrīman Mahāprabhu. Śrīmān is a respectful address for a junior male. Śrīmad may also prefix the names of sacred books, as is often used with *Bhagavad-gītā,* and is standard before *Bhāgavatam*.

Conventions for naming Gauḍīya Maṭha personages naturally changed when disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī became gurus of the next generation. The disciples of some of these gurus refer to them as Śrīla, while others reserve this term solely for Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. Thus, to ascertain protocol appropriate for this book became a puzzling and ticklish task. Since it is not possible to maintain uniformity among the diverse standards, herein I have employed that which was current or considered proper at the time of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. An exception is made in referring to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda by this title, by which he is internationally known to millions of followers and readers of his BBT publications.* We pray that our contemporary Gauḍīya compatriots will appreciate our attempt to preserve balance and propriety in offering respect to our spiritual predecessors.



Oṁ Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura during the period of his explaining the first verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in Dacca

At Rudradvīpa Gauḍīya Maṭha, near Māyāpur. *Left,* the deity of Śrī Gaurasundara before whom Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī performed *śata-koṭi-nāma-yajña.*

Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga–Vinoda-Ānanda Jīu, Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Calcutta

Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga–Vinoda-Prāṇa Jīu, Śrī Caitanya Maṭha

Adbhuta Hari Dāsa

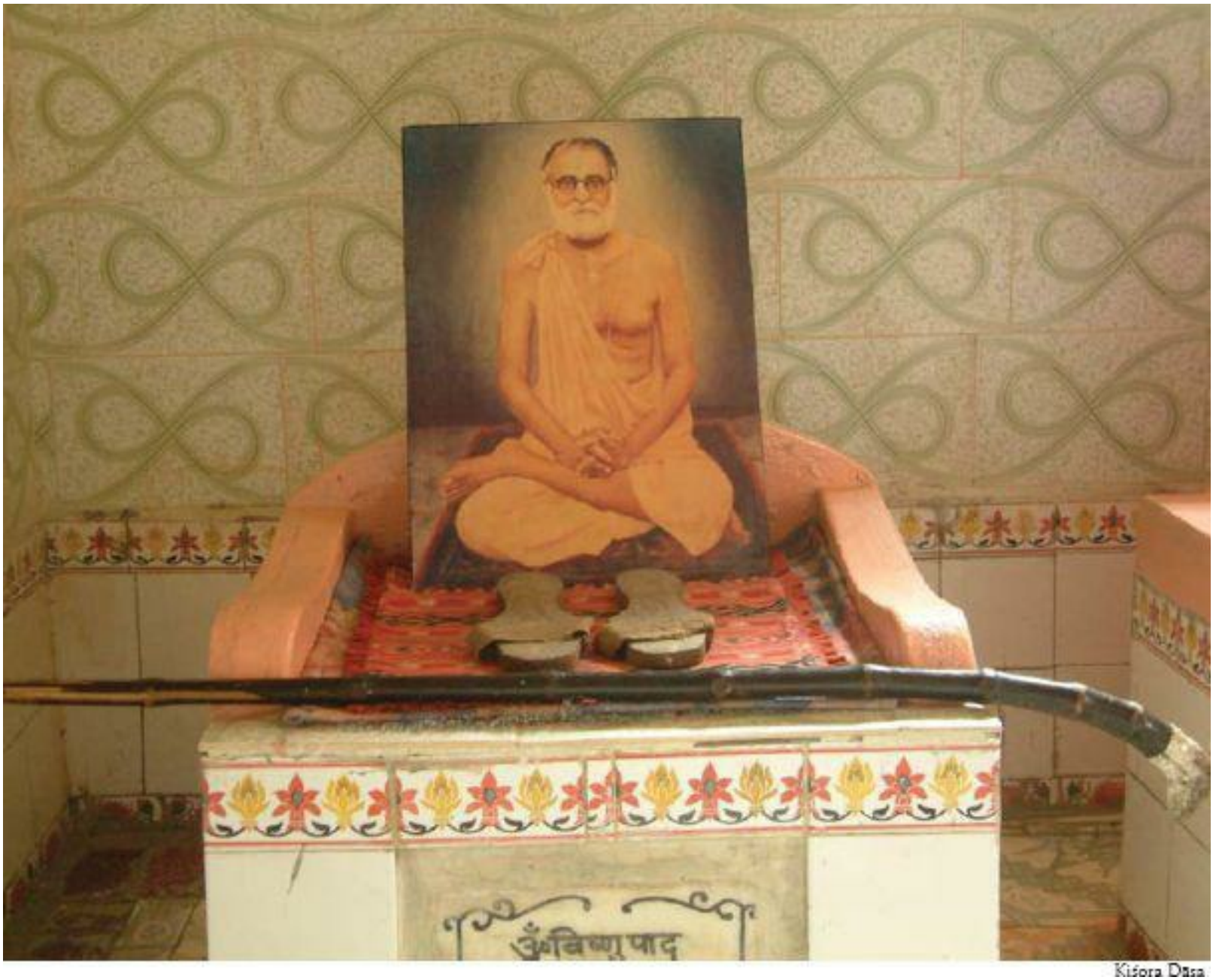
Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, Śrīdhāma Māyāpur

Adbhuta Hari Dāsa

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's *samādhi,* Śrī Caitanya Maṭha

Adbhuta Hari Dasa

The deity of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura at his *samādhi*



Kiśora Dāsa

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's shoes and cane, Vraja-svānanda-sukhada-kuñja, Rādhā-kuṇḍa

Kisora Dasa

Closeup of his shoes

Part One:
Biographical Overview

One

Early Life

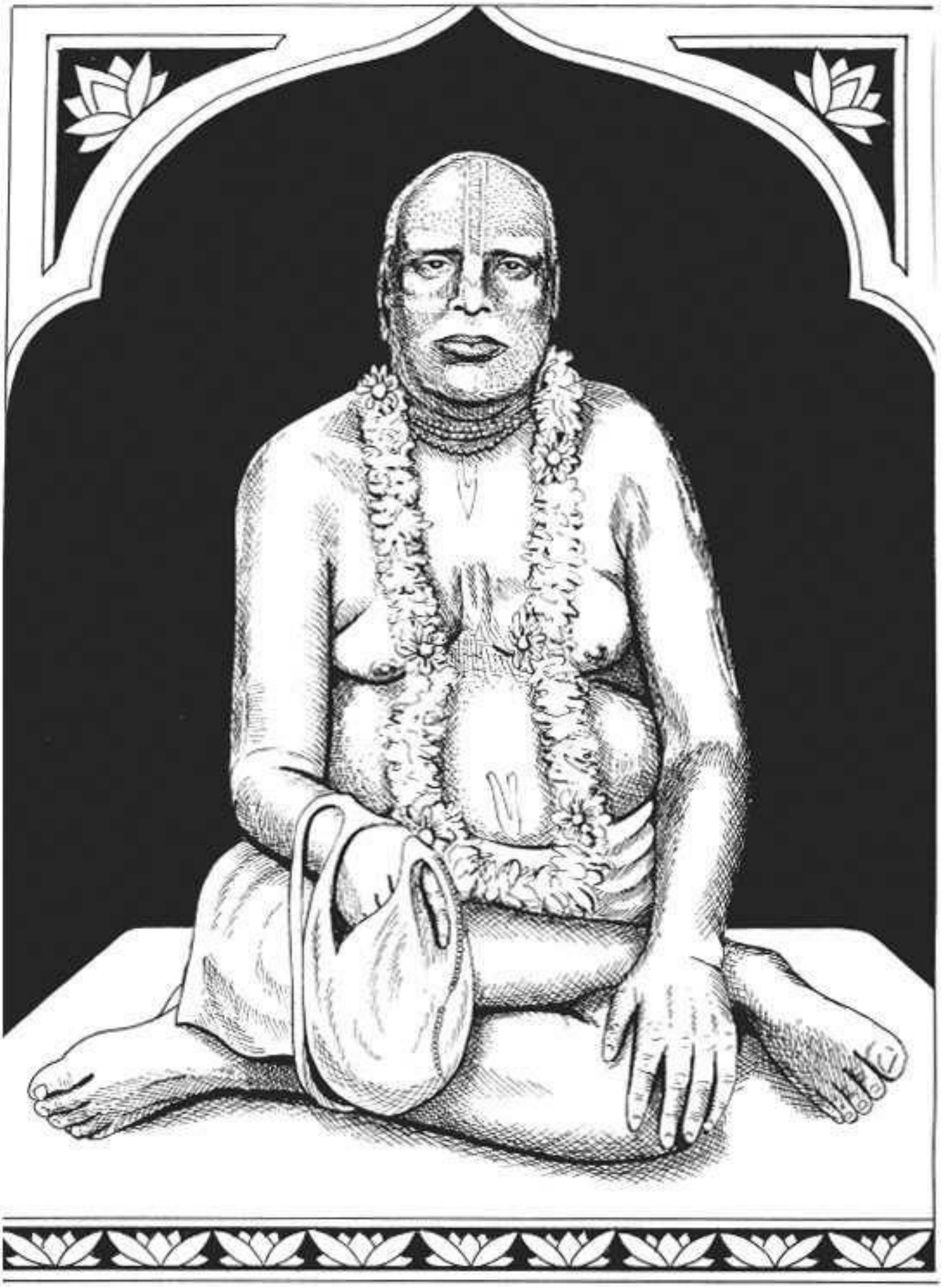
Advent

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda appeared in this world at 3:30 p.m. on 6 February 1874, the fifth day of the dark lunar fortnight in the month of Govinda of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava calendar, corresponding to the Bengali month of Māgha. He appeared in Purī, the site of the famous temple of Lord Jagannātha and thus one of the holiest places in India, and where Lord Caitanya had resided for eighteen years, absorbed in the highest ecstasies of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's advent in Purī is particularly significant in light of a statement in *Padma Purāṇa:*

> *śrī-brahma-rudra-sanakā vaiṣṇavāḥ kṣiti-pāvanāḥ*
> *catvāras te kalau bhāvyā hy utkale puruṣottamāt*
>
> In Kali-yuga the four Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas,* which are purifiers of the earth, will appear in Puruṣottama-*kṣetra,* in Utkala (Orissa).

He appeared in his parents' rented home, which, due to their being pure devotees, continually reverberated with *saṅkīrtana.* It belonged to Śrī Rāmacandra Arhya, a rich Calcutta businessman, who had built it on land leased from the Dakṣiṇa Pārśva Maṭha, and was situated on Grand Road, hardly a quarter of a mile from Lord Jagannātha's temple, just south of the landmark Nārāyaṇa Chātā Maṭha and close to the Jagannātha-vallabha Udyāna, a garden that had been frequented by Lord Caitanya. At the child's birth, the umbilical cord was wrapped around his body like an *upavīta,* leaving a permanent mark. During infancy his sizable brain made his head look unusually large in proportion to his body.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's father was the palmary Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, known in secular circles as Śrī Kedāranātha Datta.[*] As an ideal *ācārya* in the *gṛhastha-āśrama,* he oversaw an extensive family and discharged important responsibilities as a senior government officer yet was still prodigiously active in Kṛṣṇa's service. Every evening after returning from work, he took his meal, slept from eight till midnight, and then wrote for several hours. By such dedication throughout his life he composed over one hundred books in Sanskrit, Bengali, and English.[*] He also preached widely among both lettered and common folk, and was instrumental in relocating and restoring the birthplace of Lord Caitanya in Māyāpur.



Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had resuscitated Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism from a three-century gloom, during which it had come to be practiced largely in a superficial manner, much removed from the genuine process grounded in scriptural regulations, and had been so severely misrepresented by rogues and charlatans that most educated and discerning persons wanted nothing to do with it. Nearly all who deemed themselves Vaiṣṇavas were followers of diverse *apa-sampradāyas,* whose butchering of Lord Caitanya's teachings functioned on exploitation of misplaced sentiments. The severely corrupted forms of Vaiṣṇava dharma gave a cloak of religious piety to various forms of sexual perversity that otherwise could not have prospered in the social clime of that era. Thus in popular parlance the designation "Vaiṣṇava" had come to denote ignorance and dissoluteness. The remaining few genuine devotees were either householders or reclusive *bābājīs,* who shunned bad association and did not attempt to reform others.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was different. He not only recognized the superlative value of real Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, but uncovered, rejuvenated, propagated, and defended the authentic teachings and practices of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. While some educated and religiously committed Hindus of his generation were inspired by the new intercourse with the West to promote Hindu values and teachings to the people thereof, and some Gauḍīyas opined that the fulfilment of Lord Caitanya's prophecy of global *saṅkīrtana* was nigh, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura took up the practical task of scrutinizing the theories of occidental thinkers in the light of Gauḍīya theology, thereby presenting Mahāprabhu's message in a radically new and apposite context.* He longed for and foresaw events that others might have considered fanciful dreams:

> The dharma preached by Caitanya Mahāprabhu is universal and not exclusive.... The principle of *kīrtana* as the future church of the world invites all classes of men, without distinction of caste or clan, to the highest cultivation of the spirit. This church, it appears, will spread worldwide and replace all sectarian churches, which exclude outsiders from the precincts of the mosque, church, or temple.
>
> Lord Caitanya did not advent Himself to liberate only a few men in India. Rather, His main objective was to emancipate all living entities of all countries throughout the entire universe and to propagate the eternal dharma. Lord Caitanya states in *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata,* "In every town, country, and village my name will be sung." There is no doubt that this unquestionable order will come to pass.... Although there is still no pure society of Vaiṣṇavas, Lord Caitanya's prophetic words will in a few days come true, I am sure. Why not? Nothing is absolutely pure in the beginning. From imperfection, purity will come about.
>
> Very soon the unparalleled path of *harināma-saṅkīrtana* will be propagated all over the planet.... O for that day when the fortunate English, French, Russian, Prussian, and American people will take up banners, *mṛdaṅgas,* and *karatālas* and perform *kīrtana*

through their streets and towns! When will that day come? O for the day when the Western fair-skinned men, from one side, while chanting "*Jaya* Śacīnandana *ki jaya*!" will extend their arms and, embracing the devotees of our country coming from another side, treat us with brotherly feelings. When will that day be? On such a day they will say, "Our dear Āryan brothers, we have taken shelter at the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya, who is the ocean of transcendental love. Kindly embrace us." When will that day come? That day will witness the holy transcendental Vaiṣṇava-*prema* to be the only dharma, and like rivers meeting the ocean, all narrow creeds will mix with the unlimited Vaiṣṇava dharma. When will that day come?[1]

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's promotion of the pure, original teachings of Lord Caitanya had made some headway in bringing his predictions closer to fruition. Still, his longing for East and West to unite in Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti* might have seemed merely quixotic. Then one night in a dream Lord Jagannātha told Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, "I didn't bring you to Purī to execute legal matters, but to establish Vaiṣṇava *siddhānta*." Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura responded, "Your teachings have been significantly depreciated, and I lack the power to restore them. Much of my life has passed and I am otherwise engaged, so please send somebody from Your personal staff so that I can start this movement." Lord Jagannātha directed him to pray to the deity of Bimalā-devī. In this way, just as Caitanya Mahāprabhu had appeared in response to the call of Śrī Advaita Prabhu, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was sent by Lord Caitanya to fulfil the prayers of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Even before Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's advent, his great-grandfather had predicted from his deathbed that an extraordinary sadhu would take birth in Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's house.

An astrologer commissioned to calculate the natal chart declared that the newborn's body possessed all thirty-two symptoms of an exalted personage, as delineated in scripture:

pañca-dīrghaḥ pañca-sūkṣmaḥ sapta-raktaḥ ṣaḍ-unnataḥ
tri-hrasva-pṛthu-gambhīro dvātriṁśal-lakṣaṇo mahān

The five large parts are the nose, arms, chin, eyes, and knees. The five fine parts are the skin, fingertips, teeth, hair on the body, and hair on the head. The seven red parts are the eyes, soles, palms, palate, nails, and upper and lower lips. The six raised parts are the chest, shoulders, nails, nose, waist, and mouth. The three small parts are the neck, thighs, and male organ. The three broad parts are the waist, forehead, and chest. The three grave parts are the navel, voice, and existence.[2]

The astrologer further averred, "I have done many horoscopes in my life, but have never before seen one replete with *all* the signs of an eminent personality. This child will become world famous as a teacher of the ultimate goal of life."

The boy was the sixth child in a family of thirteen, the fourth of eight sons and third by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's second wife, Śrīmatī Bhagavatī-devī.[*] Given the name Bimalā Prasāda, he was often called simply Bimalā, or hypocoristically, Bimu or Binu, variants thereof. In

accordance with Bengali custom his younger brothers addressed him as Nadā, “fourth brother.”

Traditionally, high-class Indian families retained an oral record of their lineage going back to Lord Brahmā, the first created being in the universe. After Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *tirobhāva,* his genealogy was published in an article about him in *Sajjana-toṣaṇī,* the spiritual journal he had founded:

> According to the belief and judgment of the illustrious Hindu family lines, those descending from Brahmā via the progeny of Citragupta were celebrated in Bhārata-varṣa as *brahma-kāyasthas.* Bharata was in the 87th generation from Citragupta, and Bharadvāja in the 88th. After him came Aṅgirā, and then Bṛhaspati. In the 149th generation, Puruṣottama, son of Śiva Datta, went to Bengal upon the summons of King Ādiśūra of Bengal. Puruṣottama's youngest son accepted *sannyāsa* with the name Kanaka-daṇḍī; his composition *Sāragrāhi-vaiṣṇava-mahimāṣṭaka* is extant even today.[†] In the 7th and 8th generations of Puruṣottama's family, both Vināyaka and his son Nārāyaṇa Datta were royal ministers.
>
> In the 15th generation from Puruṣottama appeared the son of Kāmadeva named Rājā Kṛṣṇānanda, who had an exceedingly pronounced taste for the holy name.[‡] Accompanied by his entourage, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu came to the home of Rāja Kṛṣṇānanda and bestowed mercy upon him. The 7th generation from Kṛṣṇānanda saw the appearance of Madana-mohana, whose piety was so famed that it is recommended to remember him in the morning.[*] He was venerated by all the residents of Bengal, especially all respectable persons of Calcutta. He fostered the prestige of *varṇāśrama-dharma* by establishing temples and other such structures in Banaras and similar holy places, by having bodies of water excavated in many locations, and by constructing the steps at the *preta-śilā* in Gayā.[†] The generosity and prosperity of his eldest son, Rāma-tanu, was in recent days spoken of in every home in Calcutta. A great-grandson of Madana-mohana was Ānanda-candra Datta, who gave his third son, our Ṭhākura, the name Kedāranātha.[3]

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had appeared in 1838 as the most distinguished descendant of a lineage that was already renowned for both worldly and religious merit. With the advent of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, the family line became even further enhanced. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was certainly not an ordinary mortal belonging to a particular race or caste. He was neither Bengali, Indian, nor *kāyastha,* but a resident of Vaikuṇṭha come to exhibit the character of the spiritual world and reclaim fallen souls.

Childhood and Youth

Bimalā Prasāda was five months old at the time of Lord Jagannātha's Ratha-yātrā, an annual festival attracting lakhs of pilgrims. His father's house was situated along the parade route on Grand Road. Although the procession usually finishes in a few hours, this time Lord Jagannātha's cart stopped for three days outside the home of His dear devotee Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.[3] During that period Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura arranged for a continuous *saṅkīrtana* festival for the pleasure of Lord Jagannātha. Taking advantage of the auspicious opportunity, he directed his wife to bring her baby to the cart. Upon being placed at the lotus feet of Jagannātha, the infant reached out his tiny arms to touch the feet of the deity. Lord Jagannātha immediately reciprocated by offering His own garland, which fell from His body and encircled the child. That same day Bimalā Prasāda's *anna-prāśana* (function of eating grains for the first time) was conducted with Jagannātha *mahā-prasāda*. Also performed was the traditional ceremony of placing the baby amid various objects such as rice paddy, money, and scriptures to see which one he will clasp as indicative of his future vocational propensity. The child's spontaneous grasping of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* further intimated his devotional inclination.

From the wonderful happening on Lord Jagannātha's cart, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura realized that this child was Lord Caitanya's answer to his prayer for an empowered soul to help in his mission. He thus resolved to specially care for this son, and from the beginning trained him in pure devotional service.

When Bimalā Prasāda was ten months old his mother brought him by palanquin to Ranaghat, in Nadia District, Bengal, where he spent his early years.

Bimalā was not more than four years old when an incident occurred that foretold the character of this future *ācārya.* He took a mango before it had been offered to the family Govardhana-*śilā,* for which Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura rebuked him: "All food is to be enjoyed by the Lord. Nothing should be taken unless first offered to Kṛṣṇa. You have committed a serious offense." The child became greatly contrite and immediately vowed to never again eat mangos. In later years, after he had become an acknowledged spiritual leader, he was often offered mangos, but he always refused, saying, "I am an offender," and quoted:

> *īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ yat kiñca jagatyāṁ jagat*
> *tena tyaktena bhuñjīthā mā gṛdhaḥ kasya svid dhanam*
>
> Everything within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord. Therefore one should accept only those things necessary for himself, which are set aside as his quota, and should not accept other things, knowing well to whom they belong."[4]

Even in Bimalā's childhood, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura made chanting compulsory for him.[5] In 1881 Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had *tulasī* beads brought from Purī for Bimalā and

instructed him in chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra on them. He also initiated Bimalā into a mantra for worshiping Lord Nṛsiṁha-deva.[*] That same year, a Kūrmadeva *śālagrāma-śilā* was unearthed while he was building a house (to be named Bhakti Bhavan) in the Rāmabāgān neighborhood of Calcutta. Although according to social custom a thus-discovered *śālagrāma-śilā* or deity of Viṣṇu should be presented to a member of the *brāhmaṇa* caste (as only "born *brāhmaṇas*" were considered fit to worship such forms), Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda responded to Bimalā's desire to worship that *śilā,* and taught him the process and the appropriate mantras. From that time Bimalā started wearing *tilaka* and following other standard devotional practices, marking his formal entry into Vaiṣṇava dharma.[†]

While still very young, Bimalā composed two Sanskrit verses describing the impression of Lord Caitanya's feet melted in stone within the Jagannātha temple—the gist being that Mahāprabhu's heart was so tender in distributing love of Kṛṣṇa, and so distressed at the unhappiness of others, that even the stone where He placed His lotus feet became soft and melted with love.[6‡]

Bimalā Prasāda was clearly not an ordinary boy. He had exceptional ability to remember and comprehend all kinds of topics. His voracious reading and his ability to exactly recall passages he had read only once, were to earn him the epithet "living encyclopedia." Even in his last days, he could reproduce verbatim any part of any book he had read fifty years back.[7] His precocious genius was accompanied by a gravity and intensity of purpose uncommon at such a tender age. Like Prahlāda Mahārāja and other great child-devotees before him, Bimalā Prasāda did not waste time in frivolous sports or similar nugatory diversions. From the beginning, he was absorbed in fulfilling the mission of human life and spontaneously attracted to Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti.* Śrī Bihārī dāsa Bābājī, the personal servant of Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, described young Bimalā:

> I often saw Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta in his childhood in Calcutta at the house of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura whenever I visited there with Bābājī Mahārāja. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta would wear only a pullover shirt. He struck me as having a serious nature. I was attracted by his effulgence and learning. He was always attached to the holy name. In his earlier years his frame was very lean. Bābājī Mahārāja loved him dearly.[8]

Once a reputed *bābājī* noticed that Bimalā had failed to pay him obeisance. When the *bābājī* asked Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura why this was so, he was told, "Because he does not offer *daṇḍavat* to *sahajiyās.*"[9]

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura saw in this son the potential to carry forward the propaganda work he had begun. Thus he took him to preaching engagements, to holy places, and to meet sadhus, and directed him to apply his scintillating intelligence in studying Vaiṣṇava philosophy and doctrines opposed to it. Young Bimalā took naturally to such training, osmotically imbibing his father's mood of full surrender to Kṛṣṇa and compassionate desire to inspire Hari-*bhakti* in others.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda also wanted that Bimalā receive the best of secular education. The emerging Bengali *bhadra-loka* placed much importance on Western schooling as the key to success, prestige, and culture, for in those days preceding mass education, degree-holders were few and there were marked differences between the educated and those with little or no schooling. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was not enamored by worldly academics—he declared that materialistic knowledge converts the *jīva* into an ass—but he knew that if Bimalā Prasāda were to reach the leaders of society he would have to be culturally attuned to them and be able to present Caitanya Mahāprabhu's message in a manner they could accept.*

Bimalā's formal education commenced at an English school in Ranaghat. In September 1880 he was admitted to Oriental Seminary, in Calcutta. By age seven he had memorized all the verses of *Bhagavad-gītā* and could explain their meaning according to Vaiṣṇava *siddhānta*. In 1883 Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was transferred to Śrīrāmapur, just outside Calcutta, and in October enrolled Bimalā in the Union School there. In 1887 Bimalā entered Metropolitan Institution, in Calcutta, where he began to study Sanskrit grammar and *jyotiṣa*. Yet his scholarly aptitude was focused on the spiritual rather than mundane. Joining many cultured men at weekly Sunday meetings of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda's Viśva-Vaiṣṇava Sabhā, he listened earnestly as Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura lectured on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu,* the manuscript of which Bimalā carried to and from the assembly.*

In 1885 Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura apportioned part of Bhakti Bhavan for the Vaiṣṇava Depository, which consisted of a library adjoined by a press called Śrī Caitanya Yantra, and thereupon resumed publication of *Sajjana-toṣaṇī.* He trained and engaged Bimalā in all aspects of its printing and publishing, including editing, proofreading, typesetting, and operating the machines. Bimalā even learned the mechanics of the presses, including detailed knowledge of all their components, and could diagnose and repair malfunctioning equipment.

Also in 1885, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura took Bimalā along with other sons to visit a few places of Lord Caitanya's pastimes in Bengal. Arriving late one evening on the outskirts of Kulīna-grāma, a settlement whose former inhabitants were very dear to Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the father and sons were accorded repose in a temple. Next morning upon entering the hamlet, they were asked by some local residents where they had come from and where they had spent the night. Upon hearing the answer the village men amazedly asked, “How could you have slept? No one can stay there peacefully, for it's haunted by a *brahma-rākṣasa* who pitches stones and brickbats at anyone passing by after dusk.” Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura replied, “Yes, that ghost did try to disturb us, but I loudly chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* and he went away.” Learning that he was Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, whom they already knew of, some having read his books, the villagers became most obeisant and further questioned, “How did you quell that ghost by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa? Previously he was the priest of that temple, and he chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa throughout his life. How did he become a ghost, and how could your chanting expel him?”

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura told them that the priest must have vibrated only the syllables of the

name, thus producing a physical, lip-deep sound lacking spiritual essence. When Bhaktivinoda asked about his character, they replied, "He was not good. He committed many sinful acts. But he used to recite *harināma* almost constantly." Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura further explained why the priest could not have been truly chanting: "Sinful people, with the intention of acquiring wealth and reputation, make a show of *kīrtana,* but that is merely cheating. As stated in Śrīla Jagadānanda Paṇḍita's *Prema-vivarta:*

> *asādhu-saṅge bhāi "kṛṣṇa nāma" nāhi haya*
> *"nāmākṣara" bāhirāya baṭe nāma kabhu naya*
>
> Those not in the association of authentic devotees cannot actually utter the holy names. Even though they may externally vibrate the sound *kṛṣṇa,* that is not actually the name of Kṛṣṇa.

"The name of Kṛṣṇa is nondifferent from Him and thus completely pure and spiritual. Kṛṣṇa-*nāma* does not allow Himself to be plundered by materialists. This man never actually chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa, only *nāmāparādha.* Because of severe offenses to the holy name he became a ghost. The men then asked, "Can he ever be released from that wretched condition?" Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura said, "If he hears the real name, or the proper explanation of *Bhagavad-gītā* or *Bhāgavatam* from a bona fide sadhu who has a genuine connection with Kṛṣṇa, then he can be liberated from ghostly existence."

Henceforth all troubles caused by the specter ceased. The villagers then realized that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was himself that caliber of exalted sadhu whose pure *kīrtana* had the power not only to exorcise unyielding ghosts, but to deliver the entire universe from the maelstrom of material life.

Back in Calcutta, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura continued writing *Śrī Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta,* and regularly read from the manuscript to Bimalā and others. Bimalā applied himself to his schooling, but concentrated more on studying the books of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, under whose guidance he also perused the *Ṣaṭ-sandarbha* of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī and other Gosvāmī literature. He excelled in *jyotiṣa,* specializing in technical aspects of the science rather than in prediction, and grasped the subject so thoroughly that he quickly outstripped many savants with decades of experience. During 1885 he invented a new phonetic system of writing, called Bicanto, or *vikṛnti,* which subsequently was lost. Later, at age twelve, he began studying the *Upaniṣads* under the tutelage of his Sanskrit professor.

Bimalā was becoming recognized as a nascent genius. Delighting in debates on many diverse subjects, his masterly command of knowledge and insight rendered him nigh undefeatable. And although generally respectful and polite toward his mentors, as was the norm in those days, he was so dedicated to truth that he could not brook any misleading statements or misrepresentation of fact in any field, and did not hesitate to expose insufficiencies in opposing positions even if presented by honorable superiors.

Mr. C. Little was a mathematics teacher assigned to teach physics to Bimalā's class. He would read from the textbook three times, then say, "I think all of you can understand this." He kept a list of the first three students' names, and looking at the list would ask questions. One day outside of class he queried some students about the teachings of the Bible, knowing that most of them disliked having to learn it. But only Bimalā was bold enough to pipe up: "In your scripture prayers like 'Give us our daily bread' resemble the outlook of the *viddha-śākteyas* in this country.[*] The Supreme Lord is the object of devotion, not the servant of us who have turned from Him. Those who take His name wanting Him to serve them have no devotion in their hearts."

In 1888 Bimalā Prasāda started translating from Sanskrit to Bengali two classical astronomical treatises: *Siddhānta-śiromaṇi,* which he completed and published in 1893; and in 1896, *Sūrya-siddhānta,* with its original Sanskrit verses and his own Bengali rendition.[†] Recognizing his extraordinary proficiency and contributions in both the Eastern and Western systems of astrology and astronomical calculations, specifically for his initial unpublished work on *Sūrya-siddhānta,* his tutors Paṇḍita Maheśa-candra Cūḍāmaṇi and Paṇḍita Sundara Lāl conferred upon him the title Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī when he was just fifteen years old.

With trademark punch, his foreword to *Sūrya-siddhānta* delivered his abhorrence toward dilution and distortion of *śāstrīya* truth:

> From time immemorial Indians have been reputed among non-Indians as being well versed in different types of sciences. Western scholars unanimously consider India the birthplace of mathematics. Upon studying the primeval reference books, Indologists marvel at the unlimited research found in the mathematically-based *jyotiṣa-śāstra* of the ancients of India. Among the eighteen most respected of such astronomical manuscripts of hoary India, *Śrī Sūrya-siddhānta* is unanimously accepted as the oldest. Negligence has pushed this book to the verge of oblivion. Indians have always been lackadaisical about protecting the unbroken glory of their ancestors, and I do not expect that they will give that up upon the words of someone like myself. Nevertheless, being driven by my conscience, I take pleasure in presenting this version of the text along with a translation, devoting myself with utmost effort for the benefit of the today's *jyotiṣīs* and laics, even though I am incapable of effectively doing so.
>
> At present the majority of persons reputed as learned are averse to *śāstrīya* understanding. They shamelessly promote themselves as knowledgeable in *śāstra* even if totally unaware of its contents. The disease has taken the form of aversion and inordinate desire for honor. This evil has engulfed the *jyotir-tīrthas,* and resultingly their work is incomplete and short-sighted.[*] I have brought out this translation of *Śrī Sūrya-siddhānta* with the hope of attracting the attention of really intelligent thinkers toward the study of astronomy. The *jyotir-tīrthas* spend most of their life avidly expanding their bellies and have completely stopped cultivating the complex knowledge of mathematical *jyotiṣa-śāstra* received in guru-*paramparā.* Additionally, they take the help of tables provided in different reference

books, and without ever reading or even seeing *Śrī Sūrya-siddhānta* they continually quote it to defend their wrong calculations. But considering how many of them have even seen *Śrī Sūrya-siddhānta,* we would become extremely disappointed were we to make a list of their names.

Nowadays in India, a new brand of worshipers of *siddhānta* has cropped up, who laud newly invented *siddhāntas* and care not for the tradition based on *Sūrya-siddhānta.* Although inexperienced and incomplete in their learning, these creators of *siddhāntas* are busily increasing their prestige by promoting themselves as *paṇḍitas* even before they have begun studying *jyotiṣa-śāstra.* The main types include logicians, experts in public works, persons who deem themselves authorities in standard mathematics, individuals desiring to attain honor who are proficient in promoting newfangled theories, and those who have mastered books by celebrated *jyotiṣīs* written for students. Among them, some follow only the chapter of Bhāskarācārya's *Siddhānta-śiromaṇi* that discusses mathematical calculations. Some have received from their gurus a few formulas of the Western astronomers obtained as translations, and on that basis seek honor as astronomers while thinking themselves genuine disciples of their gurus. Others, although ignorant even of solstice calculation, prefer to follow a particular independent-minded Western astronomer. I hope that by reading this original version they become submissive to their own gurus, to the predecessor gurus of Bhāskara and others, and to him who gave intelligence to them all, the *ṛṣi* who is the author of *Śrī Sūrya-siddhānta,* and thus their internal burning pride may be extinguished. I have more to say about this, which will come in another essay.

Some consider themselves experts in the mathematical calculations of *Sūrya-siddhānta,* and from time to time exhibit that by publishing their calculations and claiming that on the basis of their genuine abilities and studies in logic and other sciences they are competent to reform astronomy. May Bhagavān bring them to the right path and grant them faith in dharma. They are comparable to a Muslim magistrate's impudently criticizing the Ārya system of charity, thus transgressing his qualification and jurisdiction.[*] Whatever the case may be, I present this translation with adequate examples for the benefit of those muddled egoists and for general beginners in astronomy.

Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's edition of *Sūrya-siddhānta* was in response to an 1860 Bengali translation by Śrī Bāpudeva Śāstrī, which recast the Vedic science as being in line with and in need of improvement by Western astronomy.[‡] Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's edition also provided the necessary *bīja-saṁskāras* (fundamental re-calibrations) to its equations, to accurately reset the astronomical constants in *Sūrya-siddhānta.* This was required because those "constants" actually fluctuate due to perturbations in planetary motion; thus to remain meaningful, the equations describing them must be revised approximately every one hundred years. Yet about eight centuries had passed without any updation, before Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī undertook to do so. For generations the priggish orthodoxy of the science had misunderstood the astrological *siddhāntas* to be like the sacredly inadjustable truths of *śāstra* rather than practical guidebooks,

and insisted on adhering to ancient figures and tables that inevitably caused the calculations based thereon to be incorrect, resulting in a disservice rather than contribution to humanity. All the same, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's pragmatic reform was controversial, for his revealing the obvious truth of the matter and accordingly restoring *Sūrya-siddhānta* as a useful astronomical tool was considered heretical by the ossified philistine elders of the astrological establishment.[‡]

Not only in *jyotiṣa* was Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī a stickler for truth; from youth he staunchly opposed the fallacies of Māyāvāda. Once he went with others to the place of the renowned Paṇḍita Īśvara-candra Vidyāsāgara, an elderly polymath and esteemed Sanskrit scholar who had taught Sanskrit grammar to many persons, including Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. When the conversation turned to the nature of Godhead the pandit remarked, "You see, my friends, when I have no actual experience of Godhead or His real self, then even taking it for granted that He exists, if I give any account of Him but He proves to be unlike what I say in all sincerity, then certainly I risk being taken to task by Him after death. For that reason I don't like to discuss about Bhagavān, but teach only conventional moral instructions that I can understand and abide by." Siddhānta Sarasvatī retorted, "Why then did you write in your book *Bodhodaya, īśvara-nirākāra-caitanya-svarūpa:* 'The Supreme Lord is comprised of consciousness and is formless'? Did you write this after actually seeing Him, or did you merely rely on stereotyped doctrines?"[10*]

In 1892 Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī entered the Sanskrit College in Calcutta. But he showed little enthusiasm for the prescribed books, being more interested in philosophical works in the college library. He kept Narottama dāsa's *Prārthanā* and *Prema-bhakti-candrikā* in a drawer of his desk at Bhakti Bhavan, and while pretending to do homework would instead read them, during which he was once caught by a family elder and stiffly reprimanded. He also read *Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta, Gīta-govinda,* and other esoteric texts, keeping to himself editions of these works in the original Sanskrit and without translations, so that others would have no access to them.[11] Despite neglecting the required course materials, he became proficient in the six *Vedāṅgas* (branches of auxiliary Vedic knowledge), namely *śikṣā* (pronunciation), *kalpa* (procedures for performing prescribed activities), *vyākaraṇa* (grammar), *nirukta* (word meanings), *chanda* (meter), and *jyotiṣa* (astrology and astronomy). He also began tutoring in *jyotiṣa.*

Despite being schooled alongside the fashionable and well-to-do, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī was never inclined to explore the delights of the world. Throughout his life he never engaged in any kind of sensuousness. Yet he did not shun society. Dressed like a typical young sophisticate—in a spotless white dhoti, with a white *pāñjābī* or other garment fully covering his upper body, and in winter also a *cādar*—he mingled with students, Englishmen, and other well-informed gentlemen in Beadon Square (adjacent to Bhakti Bhavan) and other parks of Calcutta, and during school recesses informally discussed with them about religion, politics, current affairs, and similar topics.

One time on entering Beadon Square, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī encountered a crowd listening to

the well-known Christian preacher Reverend Lal Bihari Dey. Joining the audience, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī was particularly struck by the cleric's praise of Bhārata-varṣa: "India being full of sannyasis and renunciants, such an excellent ideal of renunciation is found nowhere else." Reverend Dey further stated that the paramount example of renunciation was manifest in the *sampradāya* of Śrī Caitanya.

In this period Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī began writing essays on spiritual topics for various magazines, whereby he became known for his virulent condemnation of malpractices in the name of religion. And to help his school companions lead an exemplary life, he formed a society named Cira-kumāra Sabhā (Association of lifelong bachelors), also called August Assembly, whose members took a vow of celibacy, intending to avoid entanglement in family affairs. However, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī was the lone member to maintain the pledge throughout life.

During school holidays Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī studied the Vedas under Paṇḍita Pṛthvīśvara Sharma, who also tutored him in the grammatical work *Siddhānta Kaumudī*. Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī went through the entire grammar in three months, covering the section on *sandhi* in three days.[*] Paṇḍita Sharma cautioned, "You should not finish the perusal of *sandhi* so quickly. It took me a long time. In Banaras, scholars go through Pāṇini's grammar during their whole life. Whoever continuously studies Pāṇini attains liberation upon dying."[†] Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī replied, "Then from today I reject you. The goal of my life is neither mastery of grammar nor liberation, but worship of Hari and attaining His affection. I have studied the Vedas, the branches of the Vedas, and their connate parts only in a secondary manner."

Paṇḍita Pañcānana Sāhityācārya was elderly, the head of the astronomy department at the Sanskrit College, and reputed as the greatest astronomer in Bengal. But he was outspokenly atheistic, and Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī regularly and fearlessly opposed him. When in 1892 Paṇḍita Pañcānana and others, including Maheśa-candra Nyāyaratna (the head of the college) and Śrī Bāpudeva Śāstrī, proposed revision of the astrological calendar, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī pointed out several mathematical and technical discrepancies in their arguments. One of his pupils published a tract showing conclusively the inaccuracies of the reformers, that the matter rested on the precision of the equinox, which in Vedic astronomy is made from a fixed point of the zodiac. Much discomfited by the sudden rise of the youthful Siddhānta Sarasvatī, Paṇḍita Pañcānana became openly critical of him and his students. Tension simmered until eventually the college principal, Dr. Satīśa-candra Vidyābhūṣaṇa, convened and presided over a debate to resolve the issue. Thereat Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī easily met the various challenges posed by Paṇḍita Pañcānana and moreover nonplussed him by posing further queries—which Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī himself then answered.

But when Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī tangled directly with the college principal, he became obliged to quit college.[*] It was 1895, and although in that era such an act was practically unheard of and deemed disgraceful, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī had another outlook:

> Considering that if I were to remain studying diligently at college, I would be browbeaten

to enter family life; but if I were perceived as a foolish good-for-nothing, then no one would put such an inducement upon me for becoming engaged in worldly advancement, I left the Sanskrit College. And to maintain my life for service to Hari, I sought an honest occupation with a modest income.[12]

Two

Pre-Sannyāsa Period

Employment

After quitting college, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī remained at home for some time, taking dictation for Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's upcoming classic *Jaiva Dharma.* Requested by the king of Tripura, Mahārāja Vīracandra-deva Varma Māṇikya Bāhādura, to visit the state capital, Agartala, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura did so in July 1895, accompanied by Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī.[*] On each of his four days there, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura lectured at the royal palace, and his unique talks on *nāma-tattva* and Caitanya-*līlā* enthralled the maharaja and his court *paṇḍitas.* Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī did not think it proper that he be maintained by his father. Accordingly, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's fourth son, Śrī Kamalā Prasāda, who was Mahārāja Vīracandra-deva's dewan, introduced Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī to the king, who thereupon retained Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī as a sub-editor of *Rāja-ratnākara,* a compilation of the biographies of the rulers of Tripura. While discharging this service, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī availed of the opportunity to study the books in the royal library.

Notwithstanding that his father and mentor was one of the most esteemed religious leaders of the era, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī was clearly destined to be an outstanding personage in his own right. He was already a recognized scholar and important spiritual voice. Despite being employed and earning money, he was never like an ordinary materialist; rather, he stuck closely to the association and precepts of his pure devotee father. And since his duties kept him mostly in Calcutta, he was able to serve Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura like a private secretary. While most young men of his age and status were making plans for family life and career, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī was interested only in serving Kṛṣṇa, and was resolved to do so without the encumbrances of household affairs.

After the incumbent king passed away in 1896, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī was deputed by the successor to instruct the princes in Bengali and Sanskrit. A year later he was given the responsibility of overseeing the Tripura government secretariat in Calcutta, and with his integrity and dexterity he highly satisfied the king, especially by uncovering and uprooting widespread venality in the royal offices. During that period Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī also corrected the wrong impressions of a much senior government officer, a Māyāvādī who, on the basis of imagined faults in Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī's *Gīta-govinda,* severely assailed the Vaiṣṇavas.

Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī as a young man

Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī performed diverse services for the royal family until 1905 when, disgusted with pervasive and seemingly unrectifiable envy, malice, and sleaze in the government offices, he withdrew from their employ.[*] The then king, Śrī Rādhā Kiśora Māṇikya

Bāhādura, offered Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī a full pension, which he accepted until 1908 but then renounced. Later the Tripura kings began giving a monthly allowance to the Yogapīṭha temple in Māyāpur.

Focus on Jyotiṣa

For some months Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī lived in Vṛndāvana at Rādhā-ramaṇa-gherā, studying books and absorbing the devotional culture and atmosphere.[†] Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was close to the Rādhā-ramaṇa Goswamis, particularly Madhusūdana Goswami, with whom he traveled in areas of western and northern India, holding public meetings to establish Vaiṣṇava *siddhānta* and defeat popular misconceptions.[‡]

Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja

During a period beginning from 1896, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī started and edited three *jyotiṣa* publications: the monthly journals *Bṛhaspati* (Bengali) and *Scientific India* (English), and an almanac entitled *Bhakti-bhavana-pañjikā*.[*] And following his acclaimed presentation of *Sūrya-siddhānta,* he continued to prepare similar translations and glosses on other ancient *jyotiṣa* treatises. In 1897, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī established at Bhakti Bhavan the Sārasvata Catuṣpāṭhī, thereby fulfilling a need long felt by *jyotiṣīs* of Bengal for an academy of advanced *jyotiṣa* in Calcutta, so that Bengali students need not go to Banaras to study it.[†] Not only college students, but also several learned and respectable men old enough to be his father, including some noted *jyotiṣīs,* came to study under him. Although he directly oversaw the school for roughly only four years, until around the time of his initation by Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī, its impact redefined the study and practice of *jyotiṣa,* especially in Bengal, and far outstripped the *jyotiṣa* department at the Sanskrit College in Calcutta.[‡]

In 1901 Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī floated another *jyotiṣa* monthly, *Jyotirvid,* and later, with the help of the renowned *jyotiṣī* Nandulāl Vidyāsāgara, he directed the publication of the *Śrī Navadvīpa-pañjikā*.[§] This was the fulfilment of a desire of Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, who had apprised Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura of the need for an almanac specifically meant for persons cultivating *śuddha-bhakti,* for at that time the only almanacs available catered to *smārta*-dominated pantheistic Hinduism. Just as in his *Śrī Harināmāmṛta-vyākaraṇa* Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī had explained every word and grammatical case by utilizing a name of Hari, in *Śrī Navadvīpa-pañjīkā* Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī promoted *harināma* by employing different names of Viṣṇu for each month, fortnight, and day. Additionally, he gave dates of Vaiṣṇava festivals, proper and improper timeframes for performing *saṁskāras,* and auspicious and inauspicious timings for undertaking various activities. Throughout his much-traveled life he undertook journeys only during astrologically propitious times.

Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's astrological explorations never negated his pursuit of *bhakti,* which was always the main focus of his life. For any course of action that he was contemplating he did not rely solely on astrology, but confidently accepted Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's advice as superior even if it contradicted his own astrological prognosis. Similarly, although he had demonstrated inconsistencies in Śrī P.N. Bagchi's almanac, the Bengali household handbook for ritual activities, since Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura accepted it, so also did Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī.

Observance of Cātur-māsya

From 1897, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī began to observe Cātur-māsya. Although this four-month vow of austerity is enjoined for all followers of the Vedic path, Gauḍīyas had been neglecting it, largely due to erroneous propaganda of certain *prākṛta-sahajiyās* that it was merely *karma-kāṇḍīya.* Taking inspiration from Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, who rigidly followed Cātur-māsya, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had reintroduced the vow according to the directions of *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* and other *śāstrīya* rules meant for curtailing sense gratification during this period.

Although *śāstra* gives allowance for partial observance of Cātur-māsya, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī undertook the vow strictly, punctiliously following all its details. Once daily, before sunset, he would take only rice cooked by his own hand, with just a touch of ghee but no salt or spices, by the method known as *go-grāsa* (feeding like a cow)—eating directly from the ground, with no plate, by sitting and leaning forward and not using the hands, and eating no more after once rising from that position. He forswore shaving and paring nails, and slept minimally, on the bare earthen floor of his hut, without bedding, pillow, or even a straw mat. By such severe austerity he became emaciated. Although by such willful neglect of bodily demands he sometimes became very sick, still he would not consult a doctor. But after Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura reproved him, asserting that such self-denial was unnecessary, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī desisted from such rigorous practice of Cātur-māsya.

Further Scholarly Activities

In October 1898 Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī accompanied Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura to the holy places Banaras, Prayāga, and Gayā, about which he collected much information that later appeared in his *Anubhāṣya* commentary on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta.* In Banaras a Śrī Vaiṣṇava *paṇḍita* became much pleased by Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's deep knowledge of the Śrī *sampradāya.*

During 1899 Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī became the editor of and a major contributor to the spiritual portion of *Nivedana* (also titled *Signboard*), a new English religious-cum-secular weekly started by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and published from Bhakti Bhavan.[*] In 1900 he wrote and printed *Baṅge Sāmājikatā* (Social customs in Bengal), a deeply researched booklet giving an overview of the provenance, whereabouts, and ideas of varied social and spiritual groups in Bengal. Outlining the plethora of religious doctrines then prevalent, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī briefly delineated their errors and established the superiority of Lord Caitanya's philosophy of *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva.*

Initiation

Late in 1898, after performing *bhajana* for almost thirty years in Vraja-*maṇḍala,* Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja arrived in Navadvīpa-*dhāma* eager for *darśana* of the deities of Śrī Śrī Gaura-Viṣṇupriyā at the newly revealed birthsite of Lord Caitanya. Bābājī Mahārāja was a *bhajanānandī,* preferring to live in a holy place to concentrate on chanting, rather than going out into the world to establish temples and recruit followers. As *sākṣād-vairāgya-mūrti* (renunciation personified) he rejected bodily comforts and made little effort to shelter or maintain his body. He ate raw earth, uncooked rice, and other items generally considered inedible. He shunned company, had no patience with pretenders posing as devotees, and ignored or vituperated those who approached him. He cared not for any residence. In Navadvīpa he lived for some time under a *chai* (detachable wicker awning of a country boat), and for several months in a latrine. His possessions were practically nil. Sometimes he donned cloth taken from dead bodies at the burning ghat, and at other times went naked. He had no interest apart from chanting the holy names continuously and associating with the few devotees he recognized as genuine.

Toward the end of 1898, at Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's newly constructed house in Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī had his first *darśana* of Bābājī Mahārāja, who arrived there wearing a tiger-skin cap and carrying a basket containing *pūjā* paraphernalia, both of which had been given to him by the famed Śrī Bhagavān dāsa Bābājī of Kalna. Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī became deeply struck upon hearing Bābājī Mahārāja recite a song articulating Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī's feelings for Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. He wrote down those esoteric verses and ensouled them as the essence of his own internal *bhajana*.[1] [*] Some time later, Bābājī Mahārāja presented Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī with that hat and basket of paraphernalia, as well as four or five pieces of knotted string for counting *japa,* and a *tilaka* stamp with the initials *ha* and *kṛ* (meaning Hare Kṛṣṇa). Although practically worthless materially, these gifts were spiritually invaluable, having been given by a *paramahaṁsa*.

Although many reputed gurus were desirous to count Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī as their own, he detected their insincerity, spurned their wooing, and stood opposed to them. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had been his *śikṣā*-guru from birth, and had given him *harināma* and mantras for worshiping Śrī Nṛsiṁha-deva and Śrī Kūrmadeva. Yet, so that Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī could attain additional spiritual shelter, guidance, and inspiration for his future colossal service, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura sent him to Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī for further initiation. Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī was decidedly aristocratic, intellectual, and of exemplary virtuous deportment, whereas by external consideration Bābājī Mahārāja was illiterate, cranky, and crude.[†] Indeed, he was reputed to vehemently refuse persons who approached him for *dīkṣā,* even sometimes beating them with an umbrella. Predictably, he also declined to induct this would-be disciple, caring not a whit for his apparent good qualities—which shook Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī, accustomed as he was to being respected.

Bābājī Mahārāja told him, “I once accepted a disciple, but he cheated me and went away. I will

not make any further disciples."[2] But Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī was not easily discouraged and again begged for mercy. Bābājī Mahārāja responded, "I will ask Mahāprabhu. If He gives permission your request will be granted." When after a few days Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī returned and inquired, "What was Mahāprabhu's order?" Bābājī Mahārāja replied, "I forgot to ask." And when Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī came for the third time he was directly refused. "I asked," Bābājī Mahārāja said, "but I did not receive the command of Mahāprabhu."

Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī was devastated. He stood up and uttered, *karuṇā nā haile kāṅdiyā kāṅdiyā prāṇa nā rākhibo āra:* "Without your mercy, weeping and weeping, I will no longer sustain my life."[3] Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī resolved that however many times he might be refused, no further would he rotate in the world without gaining Bābājī Mahārāja's grace.[4] Seeing this young aspirant's genuine desire and commitment, Bābājī Mahārāja relented. He told Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī to bathe in the nearby Sarasvatī (a tributary of the Gaṅgā) and then return, after which he accepted him as a disciple. This was in January 1900.

Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī later reflected on this incident:

> When out of false ego I was thinking "I am a great scholar of mathematics and philosophy —let any big *paṇḍita* come at any time, day or night, and I will cut his propositions to pieces," at that time I got the *darśana* of the lotus feet of Śrī Gurudeva. He ignored everything that was previously appreciated in me—my truthfulness, my moral and pious life, and my intellectualism—knowing them to be of little value. When I saw that he ignored whatever was good in me, I realized how good he himself must be, who could neglect so many "good qualities" in me. What inconceivable wealth he possessed!
>
> Being neglected by him, I understood that there was no one more fallen and contemptible than myself; that was my actual identity. The very things that I adjudged desiderata, such as scholarship and upright character, this exalted soul regarded as valueless. I apprehended that within himself this noble personality possessed priceless treasure. I then pondered that either he is extremely puffed-up, or is exceedingly merciful. I then haughtily said to my *gurudeva,* "You are a worshiper of that cheater and debauch Kṛṣṇa, so why would you be compassionate to someone like me, dedicated to ordinary morality?"
>
> Humbly and sincerely I prayed to the Supreme Lord for His mercy. Later, by His grace I recognized that without receiving the blessings of this peerless saint and without serving him, nothing good could happen to me. When I accepted that and acted accordingly, and then received the causeless unlimited grace of my *śrī-gurudeva* and refuge at his lotus feet, I deemed my life fulfilled.
>
> I had considered my *gurudeva* to be unequalled in *vairāgya* but somewhat short of learning. But he reduced to powder my audacity born of book learning. With the mallet of his mercy he revealed that whatever I had adjudged to be the highest ideal was in fact most low and despicable. When by his grace that instruction first entered my ears, my dimunitive brain lacked the capacity to accommodate such transcendental knowledge. But

to all fools like me, he gave the chance to hear such lofty topics.[5]

I have understood that if the people of this world do not receive the same jolt that I received from my *gurudeva,* then their consciousness will not awaken. Therefore I am telling everyone, "I am more foolish than anyone else on earth. Please, all of you, do not be foolish like me. Do not live your life within the limitation of calculating consciousness. Discuss Vaikuṇṭha-*kathā* and you will become a great person. I am telling you what I have realized to be supremely beneficial.[6]

Although Bābājī Mahārāja always strictly forbad anyone to touch his feet, once he voluntarily placed them on Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's head and ordered him, "Preach the absolute truth, keeping aside all other activities," thus confirming his disciple's life mission.

Regard for Śrī Gurudeva

Referring to this incident in later years, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī commented:

> On receiving a jerk of the lotus feet of Śrī Gurudeva, for the span of one year I lost all sense of this external cosmos. I do not know whether any transcendental agent equal to him has ever appeared in this plane. How may those who are preoccupied with worldly lust, anger, and so on, ever know him?[7]

And:

> I have been busy within this temporal sphere trying to bring sense gratification within the grasp of my hand. I often thought that by obtaining the objects of sensual enjoyment all my shortcomings would be fulfilled. Certainly I attained various rarely achieved goals, but my own personal deficiencies were never mitigated. In this material world I have had the association of very high-class, wellborn people, but noting their multiple inadequacies, I could not offer them praise.
>
> Seeing me in such a lamentable condition at such a time of adversity, the most merciful Lord Gaurasundara gave permission to His two dearest devotees [Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī] to grant their blessings to me. Because I was always intoxicated with worldly false ego, wanting to be lauded again and again, I was depriving myself of my own true benefit. But due to the influence of pious activities enacted in previous births, I came in contact with Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, my spiritual well-wisher. My *prabhu,* Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī, would often visit Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and stay with him. Out of compassion for others, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura pointed out my *prabhu,* Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī, upon seeing whom the extent of my worldly false ego diminished. I knew that all living entities who have taken the human form of life were fallen and low like myself. But by gradually observing the spiritual fiber of my master, I realized that only a Vaiṣṇava could reside on this mortal plane and be of exemplary character.[8]
>
> My *gurudeva* mercifully told me, “Reject your knowledge, purity, and aristocracy and come close to me. Don't go anywhere else. Whatever you require—as many rooms, houses, palaces, and mansions, as much scholarship, skills, self-control, and renunciation—you will get. Simply come close to me. ‘Let there be a house, let there be an entrance, let there be learning’—do not be enamored by this type of thinking. Do not consider as necessities that which ordinary people accept as such.”
>
> I was a fearsome debater. But with great kindness my *gurudeva* kicked out my pride in debating. Even in unlimited millions of lifetimes I will not be able to find the limit of his compassion, nor will anyone else be able to do so. Although I am unfit, he recognized me as his servant, thus fulfilling my cherished desire, by which I may live forever.[9]

Furthermore:

> Later on, when I met my preceptor, his deeds and actions gave me entire satisfaction as to mastering the subject I was so earnestly searching for. I became a practical man in associating myself with this great master of religious atmosphere from the day I actually met him. It was by providential dispensation that I was able to fully understand the language and practical side of devotion after I had met the practicing master, and on my full submission unto him. No education could have prepared me for the good fortune of understanding my master's attitude. He is free and adept in all movements regarding the teachings of Śrī Caitanya and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Before I met him, my impression was that the writings of the devotional school could not be fully realized in a practical life in this world. My study of the master and then the study of the books, along with the explanations by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, gave me ample facility to advance toward the true spiritual life. Before I met my master, I had not written anything about real religion. Up to that time, my idea of religion was confined to books and to a strict ethical life, but that sort of life was found imperfect unless I came in touch with the practical side of things.[10]

Continuing to discharge responsibilities at the Yogapīṭha, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī did not physically associate much further with his spiritual master. But occasionally he crossed the Gaṅgā to have *darśana* of his *gurudeva,* and was always connected with him on the transcendental platform of service.

Some years later, a gentleman attracted to the teachings of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was accompanying him on a preaching tour in East Bengal. While they were coursing the waters from Goalando to Narayanganj by steamer, he posited, "As a *goṣṭhyānandī,* your whole way of life and outlook is quite different from that of your guru-*mahārāja,* who was a peaceful *bhajanānandī.*" Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura excitedly replied, "There is no disparity whatsoever in our purpose and intent." Indicating the clanking and whirring of the boat's engine, he explained that the moving parts were dependent on the battery, which although small, silent, unmoving, and unseen, was the source of power for the whole operation. "Similarly," he continued, "my guru-*mahārāja* was sitting and chanting and didn't mix with the public, but he is the battery for all my activities. Without him I am nothing."

Speaking at the *samādhi* of Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī on 29 March 1933, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī revealed that his guru-*mahārāja* had given him three instructions: (1) not to make any disciples, (2) not to associate with anyone, and (3) not to go to "the world of *māyā*" (Calcutta). Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī then affirmed about himself: (1) He did not make disciples—those who considered themselves his disciples were in fact his gurus, for by observing their ideal inclination for Hari-*sevā,* his own tendency to serve increased; (2) He did not associate with anyone—association means to accept something from others, but he accepted only what was given by his guru-*mahārāja;* (3) He never went to Calcutta, but only to the Gauḍīya Maṭha, which, although ostensibly situated in Calcutta, was actually Vaikuṇṭha —"without dullness," beyond the influence of Kali.[11*]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī also likened his apparent disobedience to that of Śrī Rāmānujācārya, who had famously delivered unlimited persons by supposedly transgressing his guru's order:

> Śrī Rāmānujācārya, exhibiting the pastime of one day seemingly offending the lotus feet of Goṣṭhīpūrṇa, distributed *prema* to the world. Even though similar dangers may arise in the present preaching activities of the Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā, still, being possessed of tolerance like a tree, we must tolerate them.[12*]

In Purī

In March 1901, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī journeyed to Purī with the intention of settling there indefinitely to engage solely in devotional pursuits. On the way, they visited the holy places Remuṇā, Bhubaneswar, and Sākṣi-gopāla, as was customary for pilgrims enroute from Bengal to Purī.

Soon becoming intimately acquainted with and attached to Purī-*dhāma,* Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī expressed to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura a deep desire to perform *bhajana* near Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's *samādhi.* Accordingly, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura arranged for Siddhānta Sarasvatī to take responsibility for *arcana* at the adjacent Giridhārī Āsana, one of the Satāsana Maṭhas.[†] Originally these Maṭhas had been venues for meditation by the *saptarṣis,* the seven sages whose abodes are near the polestar and who always contemplate the wellbeing of the inhabitants of the universe. Deity service was later revealed in some of those Maṭhas, and a number of Lord Caitanya's associates had lived and worshiped there.[‡] Giridhārī Āsana was the former *bhajana-kuṭīra* of Lord Caitanya's beloved associate Śrīla Jagadānanda Paṇḍita, who there had served the deities Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Giridhārī. Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī gladly accepted the opportunity to continue the worship of deities so dear to an illustrious devotee of Lord Caitanya. Moreover, he began giving daily lectures at Giridhārī Āsana.

Shortly afterward, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura acquired a small plot of land close to Giridhārī Āsana, and in 1902 inaugurated construction of Bhakti-kuṭī, his place of *bhajana.* During 1903 at Bhakti-kuṭī, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura regularly had Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī read and explain in his presence *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Govinda-bhāṣya, Ṣaṭ-sandarbha, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* and the *Upaniṣads,* himself sometimes interspersing comments. These sessions attracted a group of regular listeners, including the disconsolate Maharaja of Kashimbazar, Sir Maṇīndra-candra Nandī Bāhādura, celebrated as the foremost patron of Vaiṣṇava dharma in Bengal. Maharaja Nandī was staying in a nearby tent grieving for his recently deceased wife, yet by hearing from this exalted duo his lamentation and illusion were gradually dispelled.

Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa-caraṇa dāsa Bābājī, an educated man who had renounced the world to fully pursue Vaiṣṇava dharma, had recently organized a *kīrtana* group that chanted at various places in Purī. Caraṇa dāsa, as he was often called, regularly came to see Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura at Bhakti-kuṭī, and Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī at Giridhārī Āsana. And Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī sometimes visited him. But relations later soured when Caraṇa dāsa introduced several concocted ideas, especially his invented "mantra": (*bhaja*) Nitāi-Gaura, Rādhe-Śyāma, (*japa*) Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Rāma. Although Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī earnestly advised Caraṇa dāsa to desist from the parlous deviations he had introduced, the Bābājī refused. Incensed, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī began to rail against these fallacious practices.[*]

From 1902 to 1904 Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī remained based in Purī, spending almost all of 1904 there. He engaged in scriptural discussions with sadhus and *paṇḍitas* of different *sampradāyas*

and undertook an intensive study of many philosophies, prominent and obscure, religious and secular, current and historical, oriental and occidental. He made a particularly rigorous scrutiny of Māyāvāda, with the aim to fight it in the future. For this purpose he frequented the Govardhana Maṭha established by Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya, situated about a hundred yards from Bhakti-kuṭī. Śrī Madhusūdana Tīrtha, head of the Maṭha, treated Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī respectfully, personally guided him in his research, and gave him free access to the extensive Maṭha library. In fact, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī spent so much time discussing monism with Śrī Madhusūdana Tīrtha that some people suspected he might join the impersonalists' camp.

During this period Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī started collecting materials for the Vaiṣṇava encyclopedia that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and the newspaper magnate Śiśira Kumāra Ghoṣa had requested him to compile, and also conducted much research into the teachings of *ācāryas* Nimbārka, Rāmānuja, and Madhva, comparing their philosophies to that of the Gauḍīya school.[*]

Last Engagement in Jyotiṣa

Although Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī had practically forsaken all interest in *jyotiṣa,* his erstwhile students were reluctant to forsake him. They felt the loss of his leadership in combating proponents of the modernized approach to astronomy, particularly the followers of Śrī Bāpudeva Śāstrī. For decades, Bāpudeva had been revered as the greatest authority on *jyotiṣa,* especially after releasing in 1860 a Bengali translation of *Sūrya-siddhānta,* which had been commissioned by a Christian minister from America specifically to interpret Vedic cosmology as compatible with the Copernican system. By thus effecting a denial of the Purāṇic worldview, Bāpudeva had collaborated in compromising Vedic culture with contemporary scientific perspectives. From 1841 he had taught both Indian and European astronomy at the Banaras Sanskrit College and had published voluminously in Sanskrit and English, promoting knowledge of European astronomy and modernization of Indian astronomy. His pupils and intellectual scions dominated the astronomical scene in Banaras until the end of the century, when his conclusions and techniques were challenged by Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī at the Sārasvata Catuṣpāṭhī.

At the behest of his former pupils, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī agreed to debate with an accomplished student of the now elderly Bāpudeva, the subject being perspectives on astronomical precession. Thereat, on 2 January 1902 in Calcutta, with Rāya Bāhādura Rājendra-candra Śāstrī, president of the Royal Society, as the chairman, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's superior learning and powerful elocution left that scholar so completely trounced that Śrī Bāpudeva Śāstrī—his theories and reputation having been shredded—involuntarily passed stool and urine in the assembly.[†]

Henceforward other *jyotiṣīs* avoided debating Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī for fear of humiliation. And the renowned vice chancellor of Calcutta University, Āśutoṣa Mukhopādhyāya, asserted that the chair of astronomy was reserved for Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī—an unprecedented offer, nigh unthinkable for such a young man.

Naturally many *jyotiṣīs* urged Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī to continue his astrological pursuits. Had he remained in this line, undoubtedly he would have become one of the most prominent *jyotiṣīs* in history. He had already made tremendous contributions to the discipline, and the majority of regnant *jyotiṣīs* of Bengal were either his pupils or students of his pupils. But he had more important things to do.

East Bengal and South India

On the order of his *gurudeva,* Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī now fully focused his didactic efforts toward propagating the absolute truth.[*] To further prepare himself for this task he continued his study of various *sampradāyas,* traveling widely to collect sundry details about the history, practices, and philosophies of diverse religious groups, and to locate and acquire as many relevant books and manuscripts as possible.[†]

In January 1904 Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī visited Sitakunda, Candranath, and other religious centers in East Bengal. In January 1905 he embarked on a tour of South India, accompanied by Śrī Rājendra Kumāra Vidyābhūṣaṇa, an old acquaintance widely known in Bengal as a Māyāvādī scholar. Together they went to numerous important holy places, especially those visited previously by Lord Caitanya. These included Uḍupī, the seat of the Mādhva sect; Śrīraṅgam, the principal spiritual hub for the followers of Śrīpāda Rāmānuja; Śṛṅgerī, the southern headquarters of the original Śaṅkara *sampradāya;* and Siṁhācalam, Tirupati, Conjeevaram, Kumbakonam, Madurai, and many others.

Wherever he went, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī met religious dignitaries and intellectuals and entered into learned exchanges with them. Yet in Śṛṅgerī, the discipular descendants of Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya were unwilling to discuss with Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī, possibly because of his not being of *brāhmaṇa* caste, or because they considered the Gauḍīyas an unorthodox *sampradāya* and thus unworthy of disputation. At Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya's birthplace, Śrīperumbudur, he gathered information from resident sannyasis about Vaiṣṇava *tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa* as practiced both in their line and previously in that of Viṣṇusvāmī. At the famous temples of Śiva in Conjeevaram and of Mīnākṣī (a form of Durgā) in Madurai, the priests were surprised to see Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī, conspicuous as a Vaiṣṇava by his *tilaka,* enter for *darśana.* Those priests were inheritors of an ancient contention with Śrī Vaiṣṇavas, who on principle never went near demigod temples. Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī explained that as a follower of Lord Caitanya, he entered temples of demigods to offer them respect as prominent Vaiṣṇavas, not as independent gods.

Deputation to Māyāpur

Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī returned to Calcutta from his long and laborious journey invigorated, vibrant with fresh hope, and simmering with new ideas. Now he was equipped with both a large collection of rare books and manuscripts, and comprehensive knowledge of multifarious doctrines and philosophies, the likes of either of which most scholars could not expect to amass in a lifetime. His erudition and intellect was so extraordinary that upon listening to him elucidate Vaiṣṇava teachings, one Dr. Aṭal Bihārī Maitra, a retired deputy magistrate and accomplished student of philosophy, became so impressed that he approached Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura to offer respect, exclaiming that the Ṭhākura must certainly be a worthy man because Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī was subservient to him. But Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's acquisition of knowledge had not been merely academic. His aim was to employ this arsenal of information in a systematic sustained onslaught against impersonalism and subsidiary obfuscations of genuine dharma, and ultimately to establish the superlative position of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *prema-siddhānta.*

On returning to Purī, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī again took issue with Caraṇa dāsa Bābājī and his group for their mutative presentation of *bhakti.* This was becoming a major controversy, with the sway of public opinion going against Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī, considered presumptuous and offensive for his assaults on a famous and respected guru of thousands. Some of Caraṇa dāsa's followers attempted to terminate Siddhānta Sarasvatī's service at Giridhārī Āsana by drumming up accusations against him—which he coolly ignored. Caraṇa dāsa had continued to frequent Siddhānta Sarasvatī's *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* readings at Bhakti-kuṭī, but when one day a discussion arose on the topic of Caraṇa dāsa's invented mantra, Siddhānta Sarasvatī spoke so strongly that Caraṇa dāsa snapped ties with him. Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī then started going door to door and even catching pedestrians on the street, denouncing that *apa-siddhānta.* But many people responded by insulting and pushing him. And when some of Caraṇa dāsa's acolytes threatened Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī with death, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, although fully in accord with the spirit of his outspoken son, ordered him to go to Māyāpur.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had anyway wanted Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī to again oversee the Yogapīṭha temple, where due to lack of supervision everything was in a shambles. Even by offering payment it was hard to get anyone to serve in such a remote and undeveloped place, and most of those who could be persuaded to stay, even if only temporarily, were of questionable behavior or downright unruly. On top of this difficulty was harassment from the envious caste Goswamis residing across the river in Kuliyā. Thus Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī felt more inclined to remain in reclusive *bhajana,* without taking charge of the Yogapīṭha. But Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura goaded him: “Do you want to abandon the world, neglecting service to Mahāprabhu? Such avoidance of responsibility would be like the renunciation of the Māyāvādīs.” Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī acquiesced.[*]

A Billion Names

During 1905, at age thirty-one, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī took a vow to chant daily at least three lakh holy names, and monthly at least ten million, until he had chanted one billion names.[†] He chanted on a *japa-mālā* given by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who had himself used them to fulfil a vow of chanting a billion holy names. Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's *śata-koṭi-nāma-yajña,* which he performed before a deity of Lord Caitanya, lasted just over nine years and four months and was punctuated by much struggle and several colorful incidents, including attempts to oust him from Māyāpur.[‡] Yet he was determined to continue service there, no matter what.

Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī cleared an overgrown area at the Yogapīṭha and made a grass hut, in which he lived from 1905 to 1909 amid his many books and manuscripts. In concord with *alaṅkāra-śāstra* describing green as expressive of *viraha-bhāva,* he preferred to use green items —for instance, wearing a green shawl in winter and writing with green ink. He wore only plain unstitched cloth on both his upper and lower body, using neither shirts nor sweaters, and gave up footwear, even though his feet would bleed. Once daily he cooked plain rice in a clay pot, and ate nothing more. He slept minimally, on the earthen floor of his hut, bathed in the Gaṅgā, and the rest of the time chanted day and night on the same beads Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had given him in childhood (which he used throughout his sojourn in this world). Occasionally he took black pepper to offset the nausea caused by his virtual fasting. In the heat of summer he would close the door and go on chanting all day and night. Whenever rain leaked through the roof thatch, he sat under an umbrella and continued chanting. Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja remarked, "I see the renunciation of Śrī Rūpa-Raghunātha manifest in my *prabhu.*"[*]

Even while executing his vow, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī also managed the affairs at the Yogapīṭha, wrote extensively, including an elaborate commentary on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (completed in 1916), and spoke at length to the occasional visitors who took the trouble to approach that remote spot. Despite living as an eremite, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī was gradually becoming known as an extraordinary ascetic scholar and an uncompromising exponent of devotional precepts. As his reputation spread, *paṇḍitas* came from as far away as Purī and Vṛndāvana to seek his elucidation of philosophical points. And among those who came to inquire from him, several young men found themselves compelled to surrender at his lotus feet. Some of these early disciples remained in secular life, and a few gave up all other engagements to live with him full-time.

Pastimes with Śrī Gurudeva

In 1906 Siddhānta Sarasvatī was lecturing in Kuliyā on the three grades of devotees: *kaniṣṭha* (neophyte), *madhyama* (intermediate), and *uttama* (topmost). Having dilated on the first two categories with reference to the appropriate verses in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.46–47), he then quoted the corresponding *śloka* describing an *uttama-adhikārī:*

> *sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ paśyed bhagavad-bhāvam ātmanaḥ*
> *bhūtāni bhagavaty ātmany eṣa bhāgavatottamaḥ*
>
> The most advanced devotee sees within everything the soul of all souls, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Consequently he systematically sees everything in relation to the Supreme Lord and understands that everything that exists is eternally situated within the Lord. (SB 11.2.45)

Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī continued, "What more shall I do to explain this stanza? My *gurudeva,* the personified manifestation of this statement, presently resides here among us in Kuliyā. Anyone competent to study his character will be able to appreciate the meaning of *uttama.*" Just then, impelled by the Lord dwelling in the heart, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī turned and beheld his spiritual master among the listeners, though up to that point he had been unaware of his *gurudeva's* presence. Thereupon Bābājī Mahārāja immediately left the assembly, not wanting to hear praise of himself.[13]

Now and then Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī sent fruits and vegetables grown in Māyāpur to Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī, who would accept them with great adoration, touch them to his head and chest, and in due time offer them to Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and partake of His remnants.

A *brāhmaṇa* youth from Calcutta named Mitra, although from a well-to-do background, once arrived at the Yogapīṭha dressed in only a tattered and grubby cloth that covered only his loins and thighs. Seeking a guru who fit his ideal of compleat renunciation, he spent a few days discussing deeply with Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī, but left in disgust upon beholding the latter's absorption in managing the estate of the Yogapīṭha and arranging for extra properties. Convinced that he had nothing to gain from Siddhānta Sarasvatī, Mitra set out for Kuliyā to see what he could get from Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's guru, famed as the greatest renunciant of that time.

Gradually that youth became the foremost of Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī's assistants. But as his responsibility grew, so too did his ego, and he became so conceited and bossy that whenever Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī came for *darśana* of Bābājī Mahārāja, Mitra refused him entrance and closed the door on him, leaving Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī to simply offer *daṇḍavat* to his *gurudeva* from outside. Mitra appointed himself as the custodian of the plentiful milk products and other rich foods offered to Bābājī Mahārāja, disobeying his order to not accept them. Assuring donors that he had given their offerings to Bābājī Mahārāja, Mitra would

himself devour them. Fortified by such nutrition, he spent his nights enjoying others' wives.

One day while Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī was visiting, Bābājī Mahārāja scolded another for desiring to touch his lotus feet—after which he called Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī to his side, and in Mitra's presence voluntarily took his own foot-dust and smeared it on Sarasvatī's head. In humility, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī, believing himself out of favor, considered this bestowal of foot-dust a sarcastic masquerade to underline his severe offensiveness. A few days later Bābājī Mahārāja decided to shift residence to an outhouse of a Kuliyā *dharmaśālā,* which Mitra arranged to be thoroughly cleaned.

About six months later, when Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī again came for *darśana* of his *gurudeva,* Mitra came out of the latrine he was occupying adjacent to Bābājī Mahārāja's and told Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī that he (Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī) would not be allowed into Bābājī Mahārāja's presence. Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī replied that at least Bābājī Mahārāja should be informed of his arrival. Recognizing Siddhānta Sarasvatī's voice, Bābājī Mahārāja emerged from his privy and told him, "Go bring Bhaktivinoda Prabhu from the world of Kali to Godruma. People are attacking me with their annoying talk." Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī respectfully inquired, "Are you testing me? If the good fortune that I received as the dust from your lotus feet on my head is continuing, then I will not be deluded by your deceptive pastimes. Is it that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura does not for a moment reside anywhere else but Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa, or that you reside elsewhere than Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa?[*] That you have entered a latrine is simply your pastime to apprise of their own situation those who desire the excreta of money, women, and prestige. Despite observing you in the stoolhouse, I shall never be deprived of the dust from your lotus feet."

Bābājī Mahārāja responded, "Yes, yes, I know that Bhaktivinoda Prabhu and yourself are directly Nityānanda Prabhu. All your activities are according to Mahāprabhu's desire. How can insignificant people comprehend you?" He then recounted how he had discovered Mitra to be a philanderer and epicure, and turning to Mitra, advised him to go home, get a job, and end his hypocrisy. Although returning to secular life was most humiliating even for a show-bottle renunciant (which possibly was why so many pseudo-renunciants maintained their charade), the hapless youth actually followed Bābājī Mahārāja's sage advice, his ideals having been consumed by false pride and offensiveness.[†]

Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī maintained that he had no relationship with the several such hangers-on who considered themselves disciples or associates of Bābājī Mahārāja but had never understood his actual glories, or indeed anything about Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism.[14]

In February 1909 Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī built a small brick cottage at the location of the house of Śrī Candraśekhara Ācārya, an uncle of Lord Caitanya.[*] Situated about a quarter mile north of the Yogapīṭha, this area was later revealed by Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī as Vrajapattana, the "town of Vraja" as discovered by him there, where Lord Caitanya had performed dramas of Kṛṣṇa's Vraja-*līlā.* In this spot Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī remained absorbed in *bhajana,* visualizing it as nondifferent from the bank of Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

The Bālighāi Showdown

Even while executing his vow, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī occasionally went outside Māyāpur for preaching, especially to attack the *apa-sampradāyas* for misleading people with their bogus interpretations and practices. He particularly agitated the *smārta-brāhmaṇas* and *jāta-gosāñis* (caste Goswamis) by insisting that the position of a *brāhmaṇa* and post of guru are not hereditary professions. Such assertions were intolerable to the *smārta-brāhmaṇas* and *jāta-gosāñis,* who were keeping a stranglehold on Hinduism in Bengal by maintaining that only persons born into families of supposed brahminical lineage could be counted as genuine *brāhmaṇas* or gurus, and who were not at all happy with these "new" ideas that contested their nigh unquestioned authority and threatened to despoil their ancestral business of cheating. Although still secure with the support of mass misoneism born of centuries of ingrained tradition, the false *brāhmaṇas* felt themselves under increasing pressure and hence marshalled themselves to protect their interests. In August 1911, suspending their mutual mistrust, the *smārta-brāhmaṇas* and caste Goswamis arranged a meeting at Sujangar village, in Midnapore District of Bengal. Under the chairmanship of Śrī Bipina Bihārī Goswami they declared their anti-devotional manifesto, soon thereafter published as *Pūrva-pakṣa Nirāsane* (Refutal of the opposing argument):

Unless born in a *brāhmaṇa* family, a Vaiṣṇava is disqualified from worshiping *śālagrāma-śilā* and conferring initiation. By accepting disciples, Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura and Śyāmānanda Prabhu had thus contravened *śāstra;*

Caitanya Mahāprabhu presented Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī with a Govardhana-*śilā* because as a *śūdra* he was disqualified from *śālagrāma-śilā* worship;

Worship of Govardhana-*śilā* has no *śāstrīya* basis and hence is merely conventional or sentimental;

Only those injunctions of *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* that do not contradict traditional *smṛtis* are to be followed.

As intended, this broadside against *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* and the conclusions of hallowed *ācāryas* caused much disturbance and doubt, particularly in the minds of the many Vaiṣṇavas in the locality of the convention, whose gurus' teachings were the targeted *pūrva-pakṣa*. Yet the gauntlet that had been thrown down was not merely a local matter—its reverberations resounded throughout the Vaiṣṇava community of Bengal and Orissa. In response, the proponents of pure Vaiṣṇavism formed the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Dharma–saṁrakṣiṇī Sabhā (Assembly of protectors of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism) under the chairmanship of Śrī Viśvambharānanda-deva Goswami, head of the Śyāmānandī sect, and shortly thereafter convened another assembly to discuss the same issues in a different light, to rebut the insufferable statements that had been made and simultaneously to reassure their discombobulated disciples of the validity of the Vaiṣṇava position.[*]

The three-day public event beginning on 8 September 1911 in the village of Bālighāi Uddhavapura, close to Sujangar, was organized by Śrīpāda Bhakti Tīrtha Ṭhākura, a disciple of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and was sponsored by the Maharaja of Mayurbhanj, whose family traditionally had ruled on behalf and as disciples of the Śyāmānandī gurus.[*] Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was expected to be the main speaker, but due to severe rheumatism was unable to attend.[†] In frustration he cried out, "Is there no one in the Vaiṣṇava world who can reply to these people, and by presenting scriptural evidence and logic put a stop to their lowly activities?"

Taking up the challenge, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī penned a manuscript entitled *Brāhmaṇa o Vaiṣṇavera Tāratamya-viṣayaka Siddhānta* (Conclusion concerning the comparison of *brāhmaṇas* and Vaiṣṇavas). Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had been in such pain that he was unable to rise from bed, but when Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī read this essay to him, he spontaneously sat up and joyfully congratulated Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī, declaring confidently that by such arguments the darkness of the *smārta* doctrine would soon be dissipated.

Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī sallied forth with the panache of a swashbuckler marching to battle. Upon arrival he was accorded a reception befitting an *ācārya,* by Śrī Madhusūdana Goswami of the Rādhā-ramaṇa temple in Vṛndāvana and Śrī Viśvambharānanda-deva Goswami, themselves ancestral gurus, and other respectable and learned Vaiṣṇavas. Śrī Viśvambharānanda-deva was from a lineage that was originally *kāyastha,* whose members several generations before had unilaterally undertaken the role of *brāhmaṇas* and *ācāryas* and were accepted thus by all, albeit begrudgingly by many "real" *brāhmaṇas.* Despite their hereditarily acquired status as gurus, these two renowned Vaiṣṇava scholars upheld the *śāstrīya* understanding that a person should be recognized as a *brāhmaṇa,* Vaiṣṇava, or guru according to his qualities, rather than merely by birth. The upcoming meeting was primarily meant to address the newly implanted doubts about this topic among the many disciples of Śrī Madhusūdana Goswami and Śrī Viśvambharānanda-deva in the area. Since trouble was anticipated, the inquisitive crowds that had gathered for the function were overseen by a large deployment of police.

The day after he arrived Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī accompanied Śrī Madhusūdana Goswami and Śrī Viśvambharānanda-deva in inspecting arrangements for the meeting. Although *smārta paṇḍitas* and *jāta-gosāñis* had not been invited, a considerable number had arrived from all over Bengal, and upon perceiving little capable resistance in the Vaiṣṇava encampment, they were swaggering about in peremptory good spirits. On Madhusūdana and Viśvambharānanda's advice, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī for the time being kept aloof and avoided entering into parley with the opposition.

Next day, with the acquiescence of all, Viśvambharānanda-deva Goswami accepted the chair of the meeting. Although Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī was the youngest delegate present, his reputation was such that it was clear he should be the first to speak. Repeating the conclusions of his essay, he began by citing numerous scriptural references in approbation of *brāhmaṇas*.

This delighted his antagonists, most of whom were unaware of many of the passages he quoted. But their glee turned to wrath when Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī shifted tack to compellingly refute the *smārta* position with his unerring logic and mastery of scriptural lore, presenting overwhelming evidence for ascertaining who is actually a *brāhmaṇa* or Vaiṣṇava and asserting that only a Vaiṣṇava is a true *brāhmaṇa,* superior to those who claim *brāhmaṇa*-hood by birth, and that Vaiṣṇavas should be gurus of seminally-produced *brāhmaṇas,* not vice versa. Becoming perhaps the first ever to challenge the *brāhmaṇas* to prove the purity of their descent, on which they claimed superiority, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī gave compelling reasons to suggest that their blood lines could not be wholly unsullied. The obstreperous *brāhmaṇas* responded with an uproar, squawking and gesticulating, but were requested by Śrī Madhusūdana Goswami to keep the peace and for now just listen, being promised an opportunity to reply.

Subsequent speakers cited profusely from scripture to verify Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's points, particularly emphasizing that Caitanya Mahāprabhu had defied caste rigidity by accepting devotees on their spiritual merit, not by birth. It was He who had recognized Muslim-born Haridāsa Ṭhākura as the *ācārya* of the holy name, He who had inducted the apparent *śūdra* Rāmānanda Rāya to ostensibly teach Him about Kṛṣṇa, and He who had made the rejected *brāhmaṇas* Rūpa and Sanātana doyens of the Gauḍīyas for all time. Yet in the name of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the so-called Goswamis were claiming ascendancy on the basis of birth.

At the conclusion of the first day and on the second, the uninvited *smārta* constituency was allowed to speak. The meeting climaxed with a two-hour allocution by Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī, which recapitulated the genuine Vaiṣṇava position and left the rivals with nothing further to say. As the *smārtas* and *jāta-gosāñis* slinked away, Viśvambharānanda-deva Goswami affirmed Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī as the champion of the meeting, a conclusion echoed by thousands of cheering mouths. Expressing awe at the erudition of Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī, Madhusūdana Goswami declared him an avatar of Śukadeva Gosvāmī, and later conveyed deep gratitude to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura for preparing a mighty *ācārya* in the personage of Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī.

This first of Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's major public triumphs was signalled by jubilant crowds rushing to take dust from his lotus feet. Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī never allowed anyone even to touch his feet, let alone take dust from them, but despite his resolve to maintain a humble demeanor, a swell of people were now crushing in on him, equally determined to get his precious foot-dust. The guards pacified the clamoring throngs, took Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī aside, and washed his feet. After adding several extra pots of water to the foot-wash, they distributed it to the eager mass. And fearing attempts to harm him, they placed Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī under police protection.

Upholding Gaura-bhajana

Stunned that the whole assembly of accomplished *paṇḍitas,* some of whom were established scriptural authorities, had suddenly been overturned and humiliated by this lower-caste upstart, the unnerved *smārta* cartel felt compelled to stop the rising influence of pure Vaiṣṇava dharma as propagated by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī. They challenged that Lord Caitanya was not an avatar of the Supreme Lord, but according to His own admission, a devotee of the Supreme Lord, that He was not mentioned in the original Vedas, and that the Gaura mantras imparted by Gauḍīya gurus at initiation were not from *śāstra,* but a recent innovation. Because in traditional Vedic culture everything a person does and says, and especially any philosophy he expounds, must be based on and justifiable according to *śāstra* and the example and precept of previous *ācāryas,* this fresh assault was even more insidious than the previous one, for it struck at the very substance of Gauḍīya ontology.[*]

The *smārtas* were confident that by establishing that Lord Caitanya was not referred to in *śāstra,* they would repudiate the authenticity of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism and thus continue unimpeded their materialistic version of Vedic dharma. But in another showdown, before the end of 1911 at Boro Ākhḍā, Navadvīpa, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī upheld with quotations from the *Upaniṣads, tantra,* and *Purāṇas* the Vedic conclusion that Lord Caitanya is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Unknown to Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī, Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī was present in a corner of the gathering and was extremely satisfied to hear his disciple's irrefutable speech. The meeting ended with prolonged applause for Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī. Again the opposition had been silenced.

Both of these topics—eligibility for *brāhmaṇa*-hood and guruship, and the divinity of Lord Caitanya—had been simmering controversies for several hundred years. By unequivocally distinguishing the conclusive understanding from mere verisimilitudes, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī widely established, especially in Bengal, that a Vaiṣṇava from any background may be recognized as a *brāhmaṇa* or guru, and that Lord Caitanya is indeed the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī too became widely established as a new and sensational proponent of the supremacy of Lord Caitanya and of His genuine teachings. Still, not everyone accepted his line, and throughout Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's life he would be quizzed and challenged on these issues, especially regarding the relative status of *brāhmaṇas* and Vaiṣṇavas.

First Kashimbazar Sammilanī

In March 1912 Maharaja Maṇīndra-candra Nandī invited Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī to attend the Kashimbazar Sammilanī, a forum arranged in his palace for presentation of devotional topics. Bābājī Mahārāja replied, "I am not a gifted speaker, and without first getting Mahāprabhu's permission I am unwilling to address any such meeting. Better you request Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī to participate."

Maharaja Nandī was famed for his philanthropy, which extended over multiple fields: education, music, literature, agriculture, and industry. Yet he was particularly known as a patron of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism—for donating abundantly to promote the teaching and popularizing of Vaiṣṇava scripture, for circulating and preserving Vaiṣṇava literature, and for maintaining Vaiṣṇava holy places and establishing therein ashrams for sick and destitute Vaiṣṇavas. By his intervention, the Calcutta Sanskrit Association included Vaiṣṇava philosophy and literature in their syllabus and introduced the conferring of the titles Bhakti Tīrtha and Rasa Tīrtha. In admiration of his accomplishments, elite groups and Vaiṣṇavas from all over India awarded him such titles as Gauḍa-rājarṣi (Saintly king of Bengal), Bhārata-dharma-bhūṣaṇa (Ornament of Indian dharma), Bhakti Sindhu (Ocean of devotion), and Vidyā Rañjanī (One whose pleasure is knowledge).

Nonetheless, his sacrifice was misdirected. Being very simple-hearted, sentimental, and obsequiously humble, Maharaja Nandī was unable to discriminate between real and corrupt Vaiṣṇava dharma, and being overawed by the elitism of the caste Goswamis, he remained blindly obedient to and wholly exploited by them.

On arriving in Kashimbazar, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī found himself surrounded by the very charlatans he was sworn to attack, who already feared him and were not inclined to again be upstaged by him. Śrī Ananta Basu, a college student present, commented:[*]

> I heard that from 22 March till 25 March 1912, the third sitting of the Kashimbazar Sammilanī would take place. Being intrigued as to what discussions would occur there, I traveled to Kashimbazar, where I saw Śrīla Prabhupāda for the second time. He had come on the earnest request of Maharaja Sir Maṇīndra Nandī that he speak Hari-*kathā*. At that time I had not taken shelter at Śrīla Prabhupāda's feet. I went as a common spectator.
>
> On arriving I saw that Śrī Pulina Mallika, alias Śrī Nityānanda dāsa, a Calcutta businessman named Śrī K.B. Sena, and Śrī Gopendu Bandhopādhyāya of Kalna were requesting Śrīla Prabhupāda to give a speech about the Mātṛ-mandira in Navadvīpa.[†] Prabhupāda responded, "I have come to speak Hari-*kathā,* so let me do that." Thereafter I mostly stayed close to Prabhupāda to hear his Hari-*kathā.*
>
> At that time I observed that Prabhupāda immediately offered *daṇḍavat* to everyone he met and constantly chanted *harināma* on *tulasī* beads. I did not see him sleep or rest at any

time. And I observed another amazing spectacle: The Maharaja of Kashimbazar used to send huge quantities of various edibles, but Prabhupāda did not take any of them, except once when he took a single *tulasī* leaf and gave the rest to visitors. He was there from 21 March till 24 March. I saw that he remained fasting for those four days. At this time Prabhupāda bestowed instructions, saying, "The activities of eating, sleeping, washing, and the like are to be done far from the public eye." Even today one can observe this behavior of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

In answer to a question of mine regarding the chant "(*bhaja*) Nitāi-Gaura, Rādhe-Śyāma, (*japa*) Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Rāma," Prabhupāda dismissed it as a neoteric and imaginary rhyme, and with reasoning based on scripture, pointed out the many types of faults of *rasābhāsa* and philosophical incorrectness inherent in it.

One day in the meeting Śrīla Prabhupāda was invited to give a speech limited to merely five minutes. He recited *brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva* and a few other verses from *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* and as far as possible began a brief explanation.* After not even five minutes, he was repeatedly told to sit down. From the small amount of the lecture that I heard, I felt that it was of importance and originality, impregnated with the essence of truth. I realized that the one or two unbiased and truthful words spoken by that great person were unpalatable to a particular group of people.

I then considered that perhaps that was why this illustrious soul was not taking the maharaja's food. When later I asked him about that he said, "If no benefit can be done to anybody, or if materialists cannot be uplifted from the contamination of material objects, then by eating with them the mind becomes polluted. Therefore, for all who desire actual wellbeing, it is necessary to perform the six kinds of association with an earnest servant of Godhead."

Within the walls of the Maharaja of Kashimbazar's royal palace, the place named the Khasabari had been allotted as Śrīla Prabhupāda's quarters. A gentleman from a medical family who was employed by the maharaja was deputed for service to Prabhupāda. One day he remarked to Prabhupāda, "You are an actual Vaiṣṇava. All those that I see here have undeservingly consumed the maharaja's food, for they have given him no benefit. You came here to give him real good, but his associates have not let him understand the ideal of your impartiality and Vaiṣṇavism. This is our utmost misfortune."

On 22 March several respectable people present listened to Śrīla Prabhupāda speak Hari-*kathā.* They included Śrī Kṛṣṇa Sundara Majumdāra, B.L., a lawyer of Noakhali; Śrī Rajanīkānta Basu, B.L., another lawyer; and the drillmaster of Noakhali Jubilee School, Śrī Bhūpendranātha Sena Gupta, B.Sc. Some among them asked questions relating to the genuineness of the shows of exaltation by a famous *kīrtana* singer. In reply, Śrīla Prabhupāda cited a few verses from *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* to explain the differences between *śuddha-sāttvika-bhāva* (pure spiritual ecstasy), *bhāvābhāsa* (the shadow of ecstasy), and *kapaṭatā* (feigned ecstasy).* Apart from that, Prabhupāda spoke on the

siddhānta of *śāstra* and *mahājanas* regarding unacceptable chants, and on the necessity of performing pure *mahā-mantra kīrtana* as bestowed by *śāstra* and Lord Caitanya.

On 24 March there was a scriptural discussion by Prabhupāda at the residence of the Ṭhākura [i.e., mahānta] of Śrīkhaṇḍa, who was from the family of the Maharaja of Kashimbazar's guru. Śrī-yukta Gauraguṇānanda Ṭhākura, Paṇḍita Śrī-yukta Rākhālānanda Śāstrī Mahāśaya, and many others were in attendance. When Śāstrī Mahāśaya wanted to uphold the theory of the *gaurāṅga-nāgarīs* by quoting the word *gaura-nāgara-vara* from *Śrī Caitanya-candrāmṛta,* Prabhupāda demonstrated the actual purport of *gaura-nāgara-vara* in that instance, and with various types of deliberations and evidence from the Gosvāmī literature confuted the opinion of the *gaura-nāgarīs*.[*] Śrī Gauraguṇānanda Ṭhākura was possibly a fish-eater. When he spoke a few words supporting eating fish, Śrīla Prabhupāda asserted the superiority of honoring *mahā-prasāda* over that of taking vegetarian or non-vegetarian comestibles.[15]

The Sammilanī had been convened as a socio-religious gathering for participants to bandy cordialities and mutual flattery, but maverick Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī had seriously disturbed the ambiance. Although not allowed to deliver a proper public address, his mauling of the caste Goswamis in informal discussion was sufficient warning that he had irrevocably arrived in their midst as a threat to their privileged existence. That much having been accomplished, he decided to leave, and slipped out without notifying his host.

Hearing of that, Maharaja Nandī rushed to the train station to persuade Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī to return. He had not been informed of the protest fast until after Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's departure. Furthermore, the *jāta-gosāñis* had misrepresented the matter to the maharaja, telling him that Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī had refused his food because of his being from the low-caste Tili community. Factually it was quite the opposite: the caste Goswamis were keeping the monarch in their claws by generating fear in him regarding his theoretical lower status, whereas Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī was firmly against artificial caste discrimination. At any rate, the maharaja was unhappy that a sadhu had been fasting in his home and had left dissatisfied. When he asked Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī about that, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī explained, "I got no opportunity to explicate the absolute truth according to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* so why should I have accepted your food? Apart from that, the Lord does not recognize offerings from a *pūjārī* blind to knowledge of the absolute; thus it was not *prasāda*."

Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī boarded a train at eleven that night and at two the next morning disembarked at Dhubuliya. He then wayfared five miles over the dark country tracks to Vrajapattana. Reaching there at dawn, he cooked and finally broke his four-day fast.[†]

A Press and a Preaching Center

In the summer of 1912 Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī was appointed head of the jury in a case at Krishnanagar against some dacoits, which lasted three or four days. In November, he took a group of devotees on a pilgrimage and preaching tour to holy places in West Bengal connected with Lord Caitanya and His associates.

Around this time, Maharaja Nandī organized at Kuliyā another meeting of the Kashimbazar Sammilanī. On the ruler's insistence Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī attended, but again refused to take the maharaja's food. Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī explained, "I have already eaten today. Moreover, I cannot honor invitations for *prasāda* without the permission of my *gurudeva*." The monarch became exceedingly morose, but bidding him adieu Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī returned to the lotus feet of Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī.

On hearing of this episode, Bābājī Mahārāja rebuked his disciple and forbad him from further participation in such functions, saying, "Devotion to Kṛṣṇa can never arise at hodgepodge meetings. Even within unlimited millions of universes it is difficult to find a devotee of Kṛṣṇa. A Vaiṣṇava is absolutely independent. Therefore, to congregate hundreds of thousands of Vaiṣṇavas is possible solely in Lord Caitanya's pastimes. So go to Māyāpur, remain alone, and just chant Hare Kṛṣṇa." Then Bābājī Mahārāja stuck a few bamboo poles in the ground and hung a *cādar* over them. Declaring it a place of Vaiṣṇava gatherings and that an assembly of devotees had convened thereunder, he chanted and danced ecstatically.

With Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's vow to chant a billion names nearing completion, he ascertained that his next task was to found a press and produce books. Many of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's writings were still unpublished, as were several important palm manuscripts in the Ṭhākura's collection. But due to political disturbances caused by anti-British sentiment, it was virtually impossible to obtain authorization to establish a press in rural areas. Furthermore, it was impractical to run modern machinery in the countryside, far from technical support. Thus Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī journeyed to Calcutta with an application and requisite fees for starting a printing operation there, and while the police were processing the request, went back to Māyāpur.

Nine days later Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī returned to Calcutta and began looking in the Kalighat suburb for a suitable property to rent. After a lengthy search, on 6 February 1913 he finally sealed a one-year lease for a stately compound (at 4 Shanagar Street) that included four buildings, a pond with brick surrounds and a ghat, a fountain, tennis court, an outbuilding for peacocks and deer, and a boundary wall over twenty feet high. For a sadhu to let an upmarket city property was unheard of, yet from the beginning Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī was ready to break with stereotypes and do whatever was required for spreading the *saṅkīrtana* movement. The monthly rent of thirty-six rupees was but a trifle for this superb estate, available so cheaply due to reputedly being haunted.[*]

Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī spent most of the remainder of that year based in Kalighat. A handful of moderately committed associates stayed with him, and now and then friends and acquaintances would drop by. Every night Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī held *kīrtana* and distributed Hari-*kathā* to the few people who would attend.

After much delay, approval for a press was granted. In April 1913 Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī installed a printing machine and typesetting facilities at the Kalighat estate and named the operation Bhāgavata Yantra. Within a few months he published part of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* accompanied by the *Amṛta-pravāha-bhāṣya* commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and his own *Anubhāṣya* exegesis; *Bhagavad-gītā,* with Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī-ṭīkā* in Sanskrit and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *Rasika-rañjana* translation cum commentary in Bengali; and *Śrī Gaura-kṛṣṇodaya,* an epic poem in Sanskrit by the Oriya poet Govinda dāsa that describes the pastimes of Lord Caitanya.

In January 1914, the lease expiry on the Kalighat property imminent, the Bhāgavata Yantra was moved to Vrajapattana.

Two Ācāryas Depart

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

While composing "Sva-niyama-dvādaśakam" at Godruma in 1910, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura suddenly became so severely paralyzed that he could neither speak nor move—although actually he was in *samādhi* and occasionally returned to external consciousness at will. His family members took him to Calcutta for treatment, but to no avail. The condition endured for some months, and it appeared that the august Ṭhākura was about to expire. Pleased at this prospect, certain envious persons propagated that Bhaktivinoda was now reaping due karmic reaction. Pained that the purely spiritual pastimes of a *mahā-bhagavata* were being likened to the sufferings of ordinary *jīvas* enslaved by the material energy, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī implored at Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's bedside, "Please remain with us for some more days to further propagate the gospel of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, thereby uplifting the universe. In this way even these ignorant villains who are now criticizing you may also be benefited." Thenceforth Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda gradually regained full locomotion, leading many of his detractors to repent and submit at his lotus feet.

While enacting this *līlā* of sickness, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was requested by Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī via a caste Goswami not to remain in Calcutta, but to join him in Navadvīpa, because "Calcutta is the place of Kali." On hearing this, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura asked the messenger to convey his blessings to Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī for Hari-*bhajana* and relay the comment, "Where I reside is not the resort of Kali." Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī then explained to that Goswami, "Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura has affirmed, *yathā vaiṣṇava-gaṇa sei sthāna vṛndāvana:* 'Wherever Vaiṣṇavas are present is Vṛndāvana.' Most people who approach Bābājī Mahārāja do so with their own ideas. They make a show of taking *sādhu-saṅga* but are actually unwilling to accept salutary instruction. He reciprocates according to their materialistic outlook and speaks in a manner to cheat them as per their desire. Only to one who approaches him in full surrender does Bābājī Mahārāja open his heart and reveal the truth."

Later Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura revealed the inner meaning of this pastime:

> Toward the end of his manifest pastimes, upon seeing the dearth of *bhakti* in society he adopted a vow of silence and remained immersed in *mānasī-sevā* (devotional service performed in meditation). Those fools who in pride considered themselves devotees could not understand this pastime and thus made offense at the feet of a devotee. Wanting to see a devotee by their own feeble qualifications, they inevitably committed offenses. Shedding profuse tears on seeing the distress of souls suffering in this world, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura ordered me to preach *śuddha-bhakti,* to fulfil the mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and for now to follow the tenets of devotional service.[16]

In 1913 Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura sent a requisition from Calcutta to Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī

in Māyāpur: “There are not enough devotees here. I have heard that you have many there, so from among them send two men.” Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī acceded, but one of the dispatched men sent the other elsewhere and arrived alone in Calcutta, where for some days he served Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Shortly thereafter Śrīla Bhaktivinoda wrote again to Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī, stating, “You are my only true Vaiṣṇava son. Quickly free me from this association here and take me to Godruma.” Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī soon arrived in Bhakti Bhavan but was prevented from taking Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura due to other family members’ objections concerning the aged patriarch's health. Thus Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī was obliged to return alone. Yet upon reaching the train station in Calcutta, he was met by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who had arrived by car, accompanied by the same relatives who had forbidden him to go but finally yielded to his insistence.

During this period, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī was composing *Anubhāṣya* and regularly sending drafts to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura for checking. This endeavor much pleased Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who became especially delighted upon perusing Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's comments on *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* 1.1.19: *ei tina ṭhākura... tine mora nātha.*

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura left this world from Bhakti Bhavan on 23 June 1914. Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī was then in Māyāpur. Although earlier that day he had received news by telegram of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's impending departure, because trains were delayed due to monsoonal rains and flooding, he did not reach Calcutta till almost eight in the evening, a few hours after the Ṭhākura's passing. In the meantime his other brothers had performed a cremation ceremony.* Arriving amid sobbing and wailing, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī found his mother calm and composed, exhibiting no outward signs of grief. Wanting to placate her with meaningful words he said, “Today is one of great happiness and not the slightest grief. Today our master has reentered the eternal pastimes of the Lord. Now it is our duty to remember his eternal position, name, qualities, form, and pastimes. Henceforth we will follow in his footsteps even more concentratedly.” Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's mother responded, “He departed after offering you plenteous blessings. He repeatedly mentioned your firm faith in *śuddha-bhakti,* and instructed that you should serve Śrī Māyāpur and propagate the message of Śrīman Mahāprabhu.”

Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī next addressed the gathering of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda's kinsfolk and followers. Describing the Ṭhākura's transcendental qualities until deep into the night, he substantiated that obsequies for a Vaiṣṇava must be executed in conformance to Vaiṣṇava directions as given in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* and *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā,* rather than by *smārta* rites. Accordingly, disciples of the Ṭhākura performed the remaining rituals as appropriate for a *mahā-bhāgavata.*

On 27 December 1914, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī established a *puṣpa-samādhi* at Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja. In honor of this most exalted Vaiṣṇava within centuries, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī held a three-day remembrance festival there.

Then on 4 September 1915, the day of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *āvirbhāva-tithi,* in

conjunction with the Bhaktivinoda Memorial Committee, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī organized the first annual public meeting in honor of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, at the prestigious Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣad hall, situated close to Ultadingi Road.* Several of the most distinguished intellectuals of Bengal attended and glorified the contributions and personality of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī

Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja disappeared from this plane on 16 November 1915. Several heads of temples had been awaiting his departure in hope of situating his *samādhi* in their individual *maṭhas,* to attract pilgrims and thereby increase their own prestige and income. Thus the competition generated by his passing was intense and nasty. A young man named Umāpati described the scene:†

> After Bābājī Mahārāja's departure there were many opinions and disturbances over who would establish his *samādhi*. Hīrālāla Goswami and a few others sent Śrī Padmanābha Brahmacārī, alias Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya dāsa, to Māyāpur to fetch Śrīla Prabhupāda and told me to go with him. As we were crossing the river by ferryboat we saw Prabhupāda coming bare-footed and wearing a warm green *cādar*. With him was Śrī Paramānanda Brahmacārī. It was Cātur-māsya, and Prabhupāda's hair and beard were long.
>
> Seeing him, we prostrated in respect and apprised him in detail of the situation. After crossing the river, Prabhupāda arrived at the Rāṇī Dharmaśālā, where Bābājī Mahārāja used to stay. The *mahāntas* of the *ākhḍās* in Navadvīpa were arguing among themselves about taking Bābājī Mahārāja's spiritually blissful body for inaugurating his *samādhi,* because the shrine of such a *siddha-mahātmā* could be used to raise money. Śrīla Prabhupāda balked their illegitimate attempts. Apprehending a breach of peace, the Navadvīpa police inspector arrived.
>
> After much hullabaloo, a *bābājī* remonstrated, "Siddhānta Sarasvatī is not a renunciant and therefore not eligible to establish a *samādhi* for a renunciant." Prabhupāda thunderously retorted, "I am the only disciple of Paramahaṁsa Bābājī Mahārāja.* Even though I am not officially a renunciant I am a celibate *brahmacārī*.† And by the grace of Bābājī Mahārāja I am not furtively addicted to abominable habits or involved in fornication as are certain simian people. If anyone here is a renunciant of truly stainless character, we have no objection to his establishing Bābājī Mahārāja's *samādhi*. He who within the last one year, or six months, one month, or at least within the last three days has not had any illicit contact with a woman, will be able to touch this spiritually blissful body. If anyone else touches it, he will be completely ruined." The police inspector asked Prabhupāda how evidence of this could be ascertained, to which Prabhupāda replied that he would accept their word. Everyone present was astonished to see those dressed as *bābājīs* turn their backs one by one and quietly disappear.[17]

Some two to three months before his departure, during apparent sickness, Śrīla Gaura Kiśora

dāsa Bābājī had called Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī from Māyāpur and instructed that his *samādhi* should be established either in Māyāpur or Godruma, but if neither of these alternatives were possible, then his body should be dragged by municipal sweepers through the streets of Kuliyā and finally thrown in the Gaṅgā. But due to pressure from others, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī was now unable to take the transcendental form of his guru-*mahārāja* to Māyāpur; nor could he accede to those persons reiterating Bābājī Mahārāja's words that his form be towed in the streets. In response to their demand Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī stated, "My *śrī-gurudeva,* whom Kṛṣṇacandra Himself feels privileged to carry on His head and shoulders, spoke such humble words to destroy the arrogance of nondevotees. Even though we are fools, inexperienced, and offenders, we shall not be averse to comprehending his actual intent. How greatly was Śrī Gaurasundara embellished by dancing while holding on His lap the spiritually blissful form of Ṭhākura Haridāsa after his passing! Following in Śrīman Mahāprabhu's footsteps, we shall carry the transcendental form of Bābājī Mahārāja on our heads."

The next day, with his own hands Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī dug out and shaped the *samādhi* on an alluvial bank of the Gaṅgā in Kuliyā, in the vicinity where Bābājī Mahārāja had performed much *bhajana.* The site was owned by the brothers Ananta and Vanamālī Poddar, prosperous businessmen who had been assisting Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura for some years and were accepted within his circle. Claiming to have donated that property and given up all rights to it, they personally labored and spent money both for establishing a plinth thereat, and later for daily services conducted there under Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's direction and for the large annual festival celebrating Bābājī Mahārāja's *tirobhāva.* Yet after a few years Ananta and Vanamālī's outlook changed, and they attempted to claim that site in the transcendental *dhāma* as family property. Ignoring the repeated protests of Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī and his followers and sympathizers, the brothers eventually forbad them access to the *samādhi*. As a result of these heinous offenses, Ananta and Vanamālī soon lost their considerable pelf and underwent acute domestic problems, later losing both the *samādhī* and the land on which it was situated, and being sent to jail for six months.[*]

Upon Bābājī Mahārāja's disappearance, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī inwardly bemoaned, "Now who will chastise me, to make me understand the truth as it is?" Having seen many disturbances arise in the Vaiṣṇava community following the *tirobhāva* of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura just sixteen months before, feeling disappointment and hopelessness and keenly suffering the absence of his two muses, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī resolved to keep to himself and desist from speaking Hari-*kathā* to others. Although he had commented on eight of the eleven verses of *Anuvṛtti* (a further elaboration on Śrīla Bhaktivinoda's *Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti* gloss on Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Upadeśāmṛta*), which he was composing on Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's specific order, he ceased working on it. He lamented, "To whom will I show my articles and books? Who will take pleasure in my writings and encourage me to continue? Who will take pleasure in hearing about the preaching work and the increasing splendor of the *dhāma* and our service to it?"

Instructions in a vision

Practically forgoing food and sleep, he remained engaged in intense *bhajana* while wrestling with a dilemma. His heart reverberated with Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's order that he not

renounce service to Mahāprabhu. And seeing the mass of people spoiling their valuable human life, simply taking birth and then dying without information of or interest in the incomparable boons offered by Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī was unceasingly contemplating the need to preach. Yet having experienced the kind of malicious opposition he would have to face for speaking the truth, he was reluctant to return to public life. Then one day a gust of wind blew before him an extract from *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* wherein Lord Caitanya instructed Sanātana Gosvāmī to compose transcendental literature, renovate forgotten holy places, institute service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, and propagate *bhakti-rasa.*[18] Taking this as a divine indication, but feeling depressed and incapable, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī pondered, "I have no public support, nor wealth, learning, or the intelligence required to waken interest in the populace. How can I convey to the inhospitable world the pure teachings of Śrī Caitanya and establish the *mano-'bhīṣṭa* of my gurus?"

Shortly afterward, one night at the Yogapīṭha, in a dreamlike revelation he saw approaching him from the east the Pañca-tattva, the Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana, Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, and numerous other great devotees of Lord Caitanya. They told him:

> Sarasvatī! Why are you worrying? Begin the task of establishing *śuddha-bhakti.* Distribute Gaura-*vāṇī* universally. Expand service to Gaura-*nāma,* Gaura-*dhāma,* and Gaura-*kāma.*[*] With unbreached enthusiasm broadcast *bhakti-siddhānta.* We are eternally with you, ready to help. The support of unlimited people, immeasurable opulence, and boundless scholarship awaits the blessing to serve your mission. All will manifest when required. Come forward with full strength to distribute the message of Mahāprabhu's *prema-dharma* throughout the globe. No worldly hindrance or menace will be able to obstruct this undertaking of yours. We are forever with you.[19]

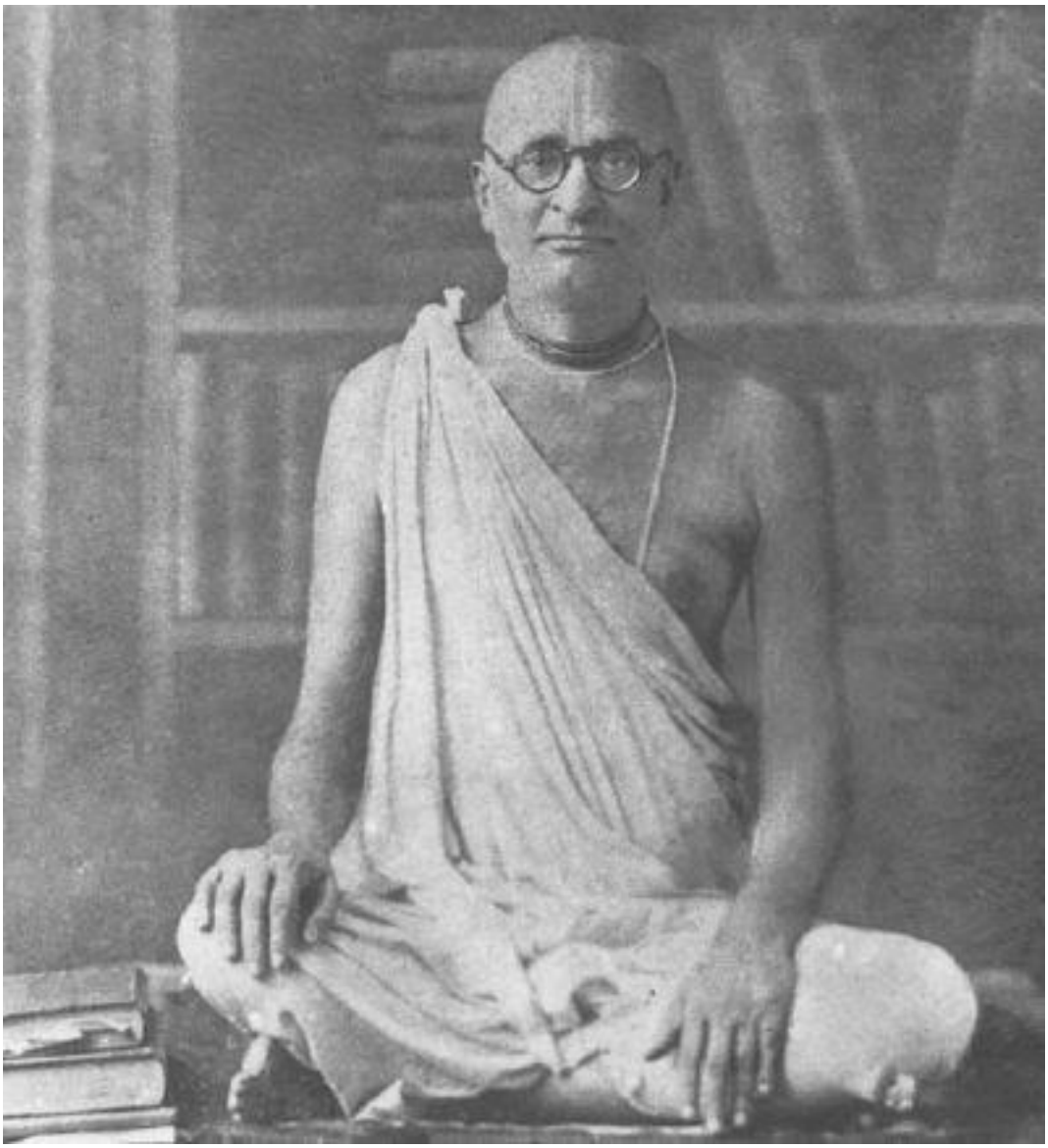
Next morning, the few young disciples who had gathered round him saw for the first time in many days his face refulgent in happiness. He related to them the vision he had seen. Before long he resumed working on *Anuvṛtti,* and thenceforth his avidity for preaching was fully rekindled and unretractable.

Oṁ Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī

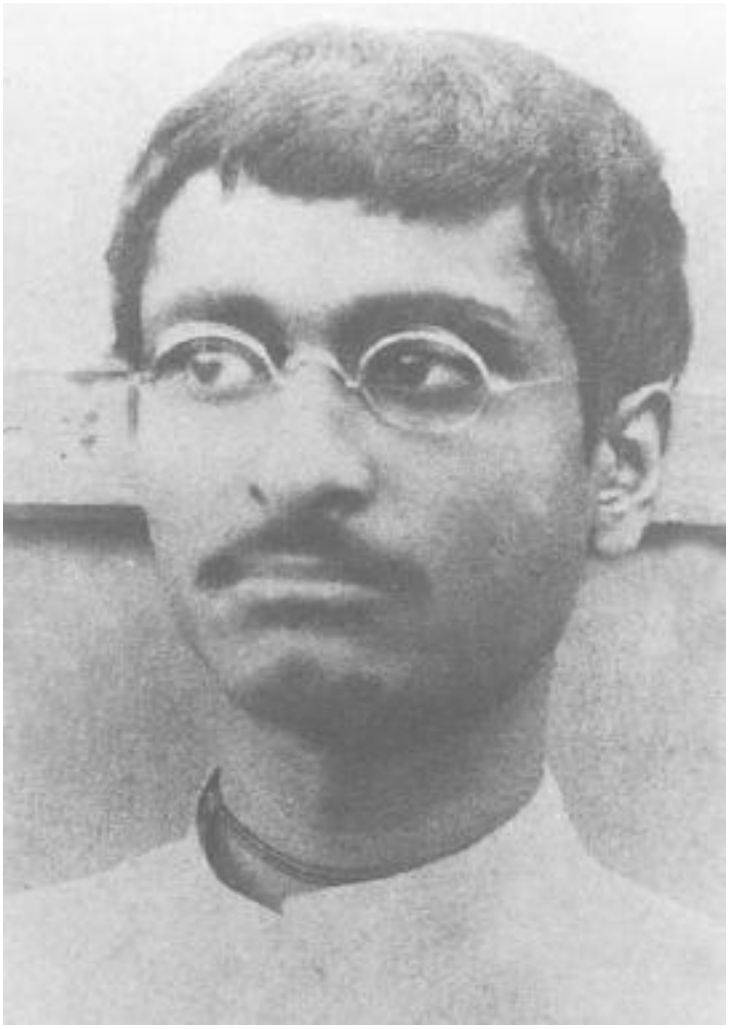


Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī

Śrīmatī Bhagavatī-devī (the mother of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī)

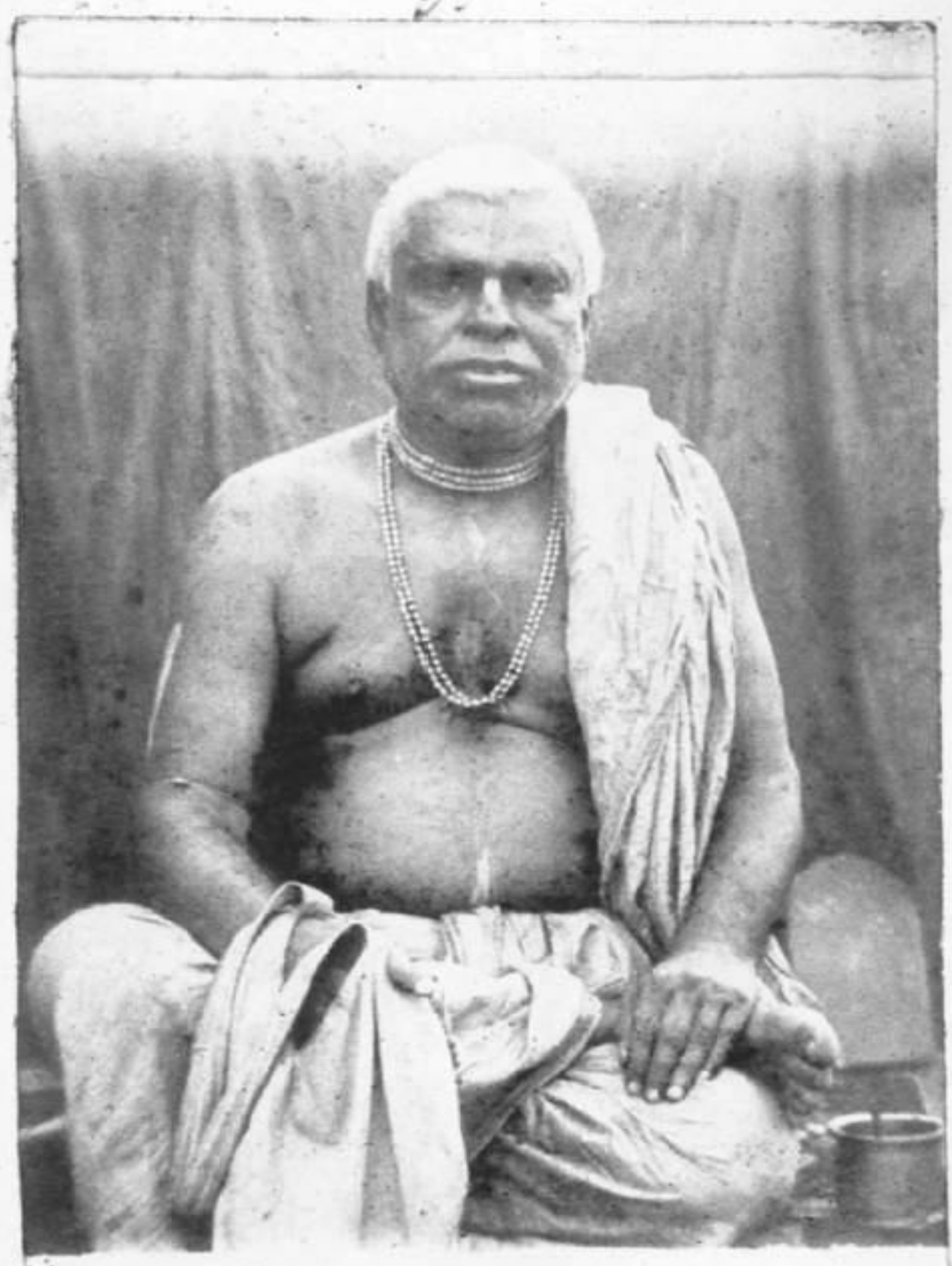
In childhood (1881)

The appearance site of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī



Śrī Bimalā Prasāda Datta in his youth

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's family (*top, far left,* Bimalā Prasāda)

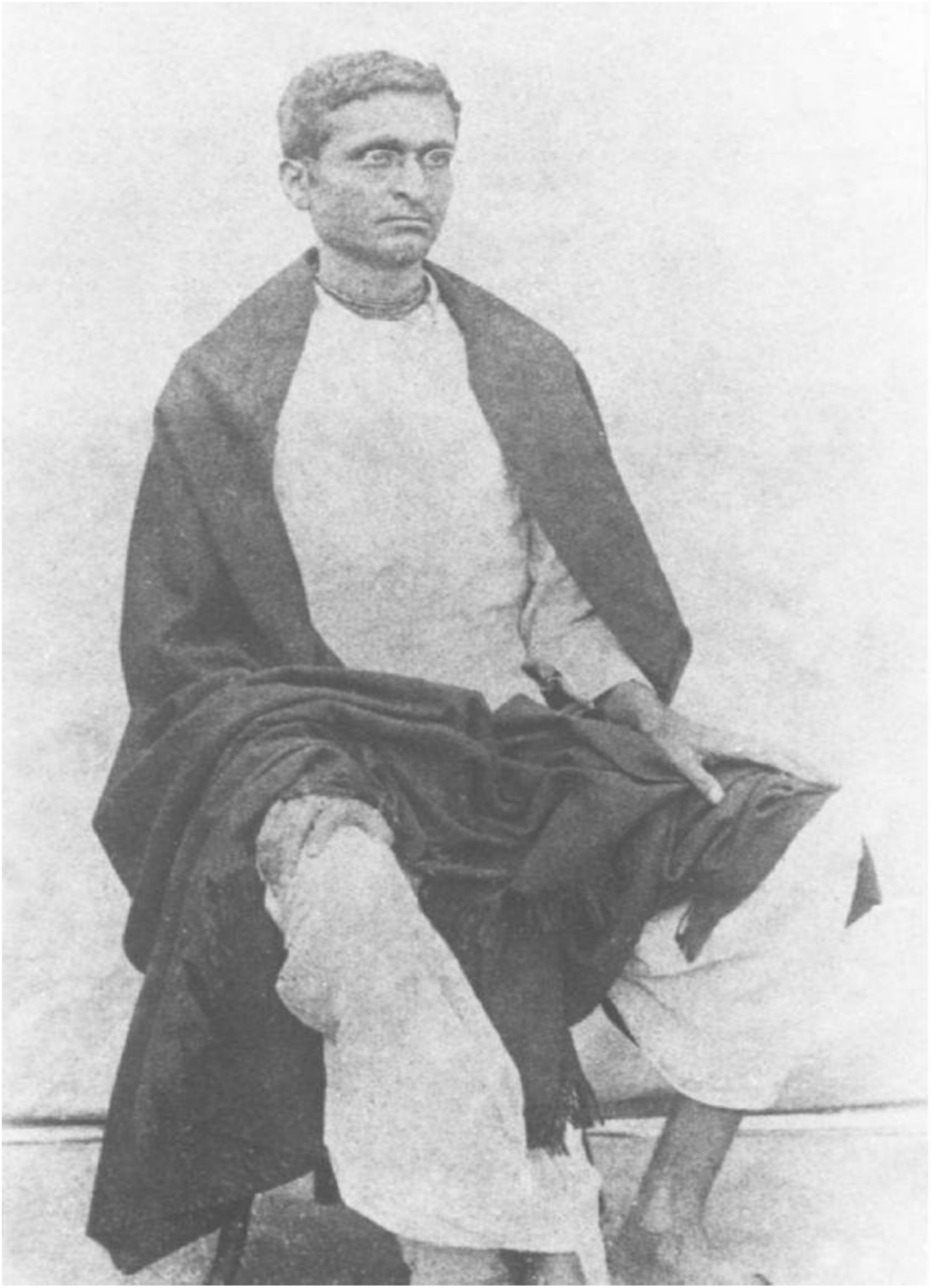


“Babu Bimala Prosad Dutt with affection” “Kedarnath Dutt Bhakti Vinod 21 March 96”

Śrī Bimalā Prasāda Datta, Śrī Basanta Kumar Ghosh Bhaktyāśrama, Śrī Manindranath Datta Bhakti Ratna Ṭhākura, Śrī Manmathanath Raya Bhakti Prakāśa, Śrī Khetranath Sarkar Bhakti Nidhi, Śrī Sītānātha dāsa Mahāpātra Bhakti Tīrtha, Śrī Bipin Bihari Sarkar Bhakti Bhṛṅga

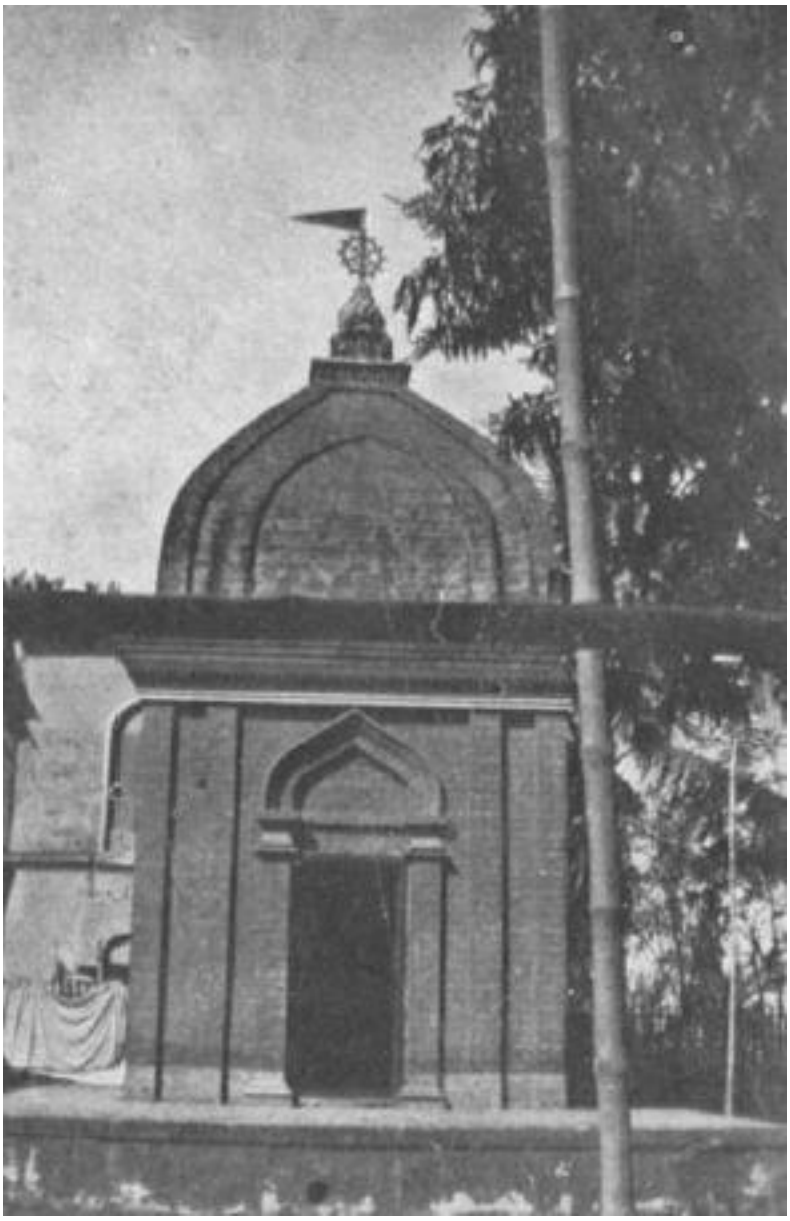
Śrī Bimalā Prasāda Datta in youth

During the period of *śata-koṭi-nāma-yajña* (pp. 39–40)



Śrī Bimalā Prasāda Datta

29 March 1918, two days after accepting *sannyāsa*

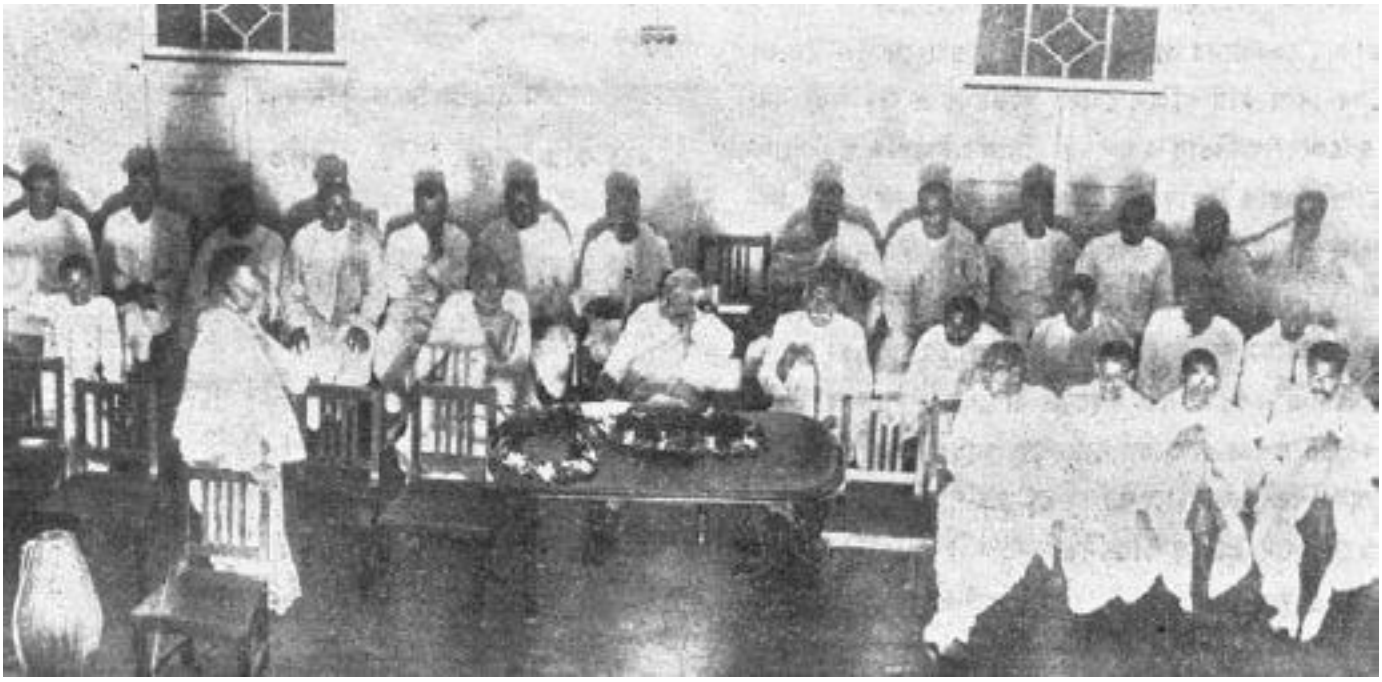


Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *puṣpa-samādhi,* Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja, Navadvīpa-dhāma

Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī's *bhajana-kuṭīra,* Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja, Navadvīpa-dhāma

Outside Bhaktivinoda Āsana, Calcutta

Saṅkīrtana at the site designated for Śrī Mādhva Gauḍīya Maṭha, Dacca



Onstage at Calcutta's Albert Hall, 28 July 1929

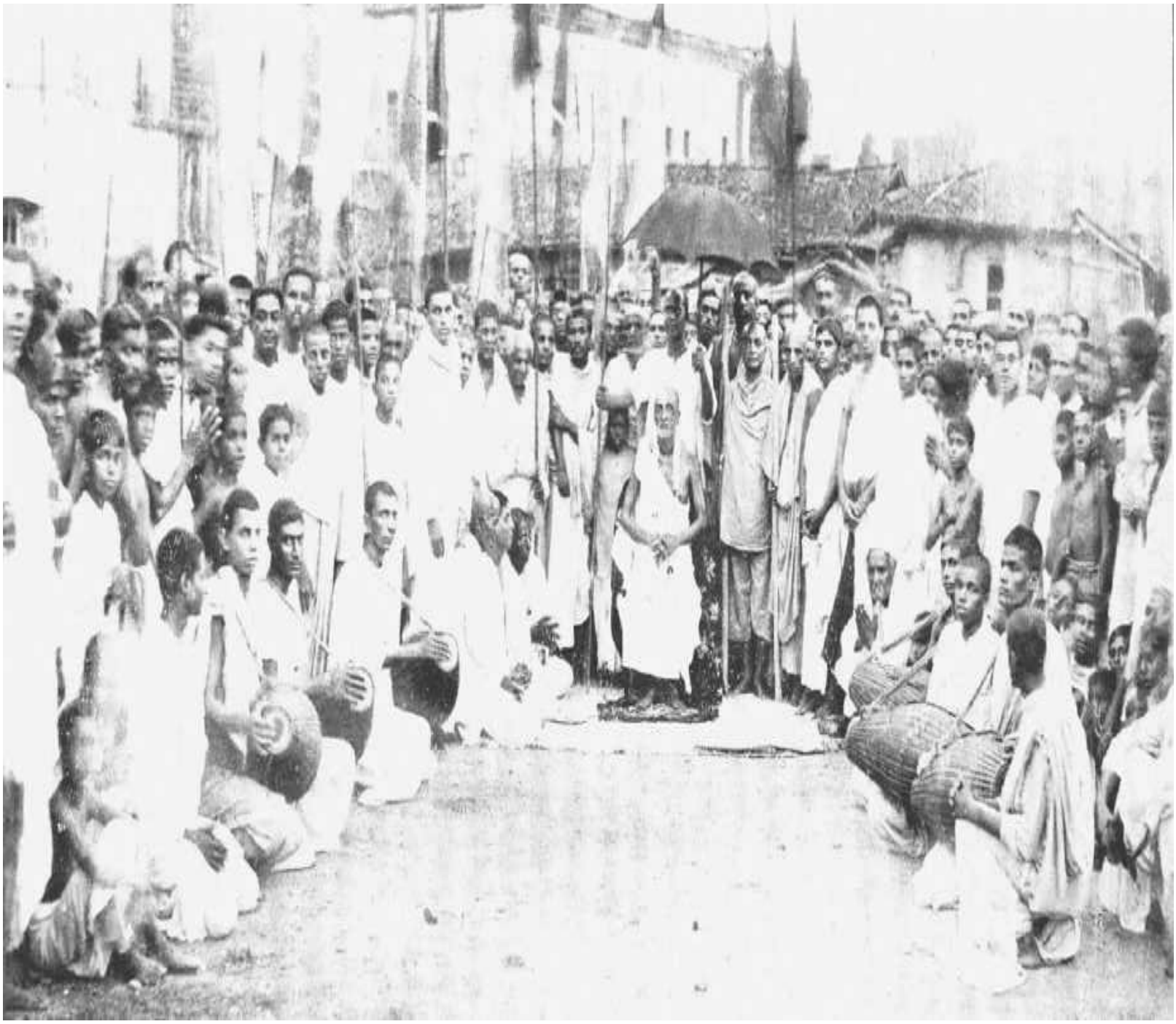
Oṁ Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda is seated to the right of the honorable chairman, Sir Śrī-yukta Dr. Deva Prasāda Sarvādhikārī (*center*). To the chairman's left are Maharaja Sir Maṇīndra-candra Nandī Bāhādura; Rāya Śrī Cunīlāla Basu Bāhādura, C.I.E.; Mr. B.K. Sen; and others. The devotee who is standing [probably Śrī Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda] is delivering a speech. *Top, from the left:* Ācārya Śrīpāda Ananta Vāsudeva Paravidyābhūṣaṇa, B.A.; Paṇḍita Śrī-yukta Haripada Vidyāratna, M.A., B.L.; Śreṣṭhyārya Śrī-yukta Jagabandhu Bhakti Rañjana; and others.

In *sannyāsa* dress

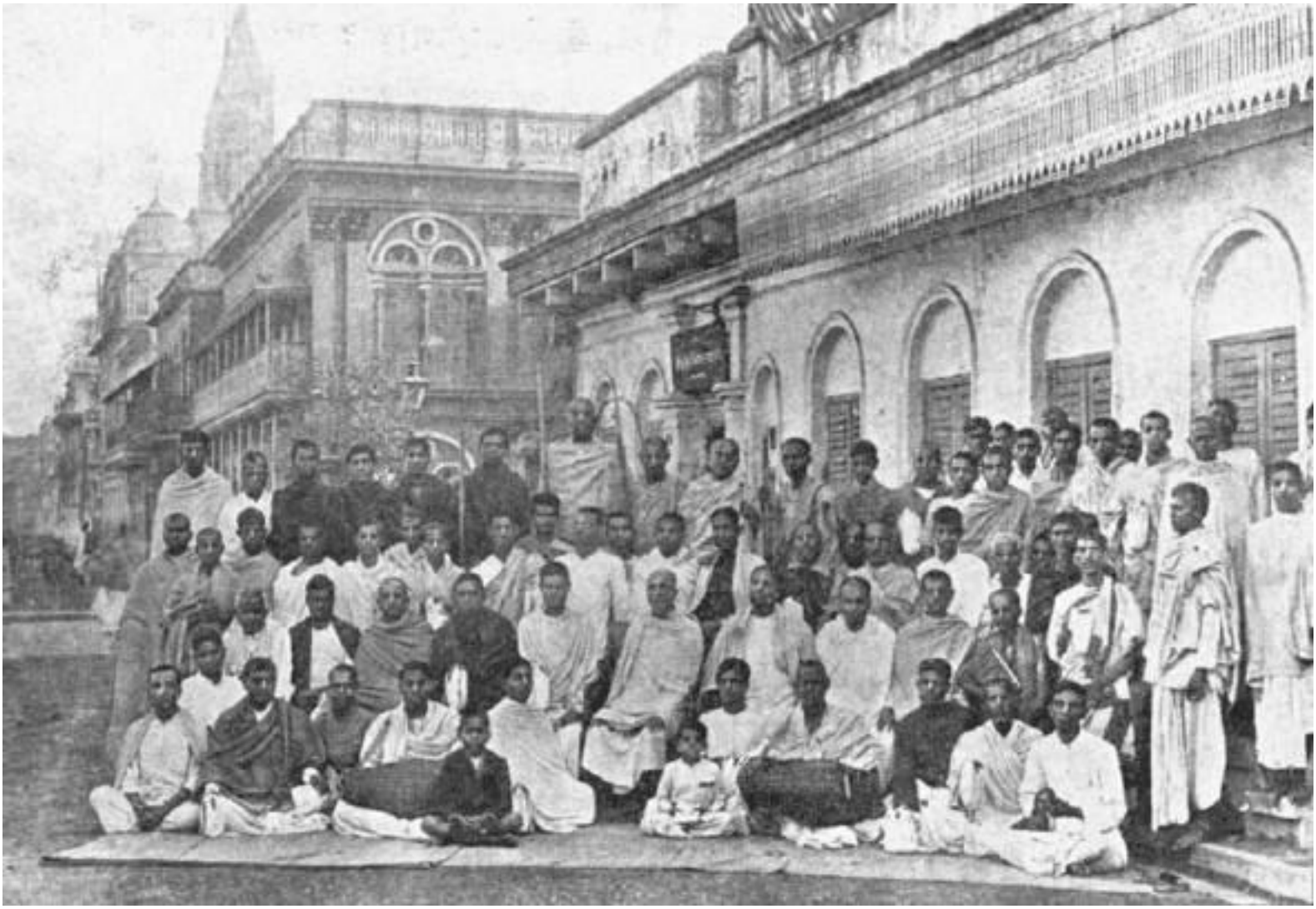
Śrī Saccidānanda Maṭha, Cuttack

With Śrī-yuta Ponirula Pillai, the donor of the hall at Madras Gauḍīya Maṭha

The Maharaja of Jeypore, Orissa, who donated for the temple of the Madras Gauḍīya Maṭha



At the land donated for Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha. The donor, Śrī Jagabandhu Prabhu, is seated immediately to the right of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.

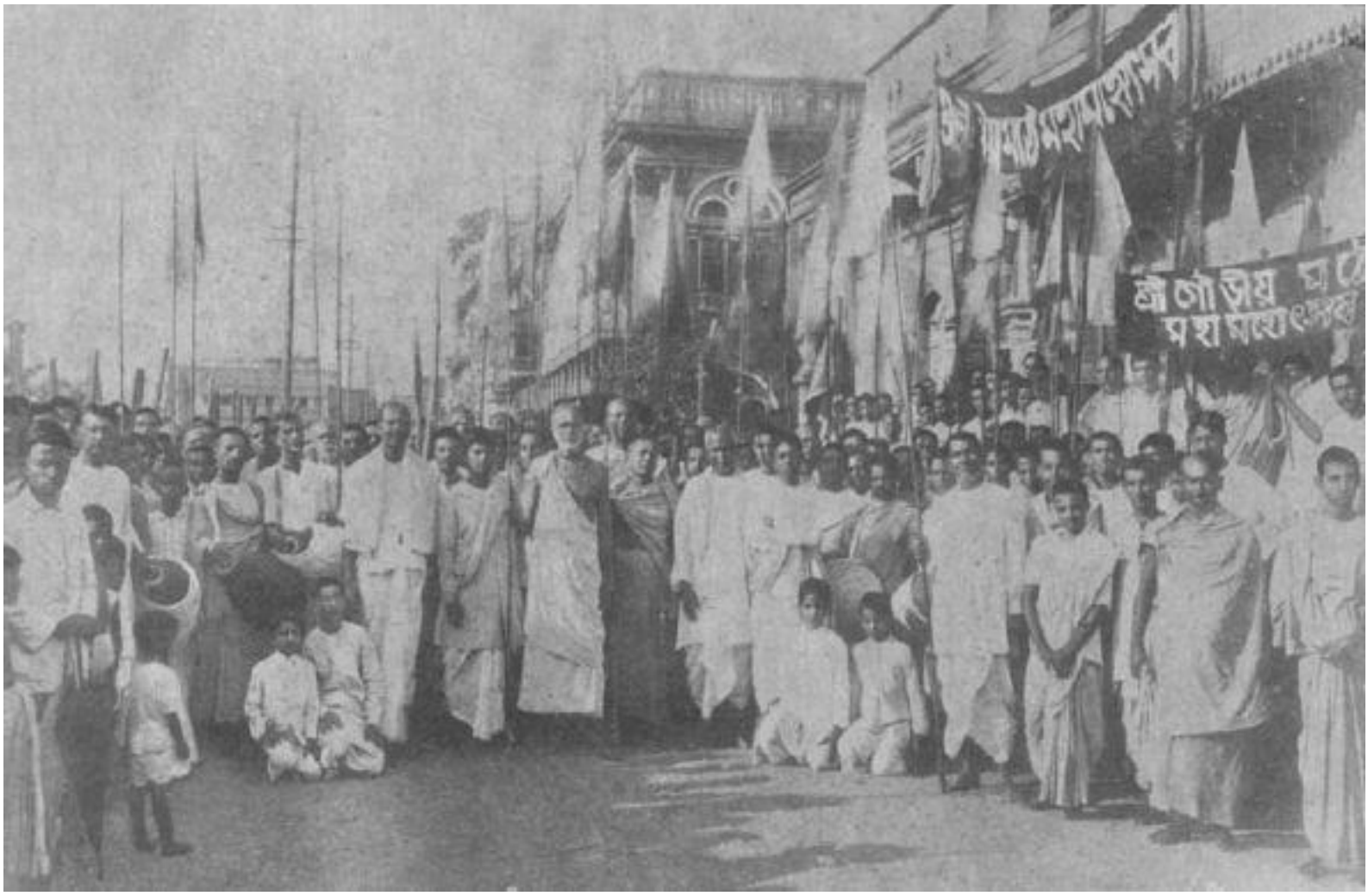


Outside Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Ultadingi Road, on the occasion of Śrī Vyāsa-*pūjā,* 20 February 1927. The spire of the Parśvanātha temple is in the background.

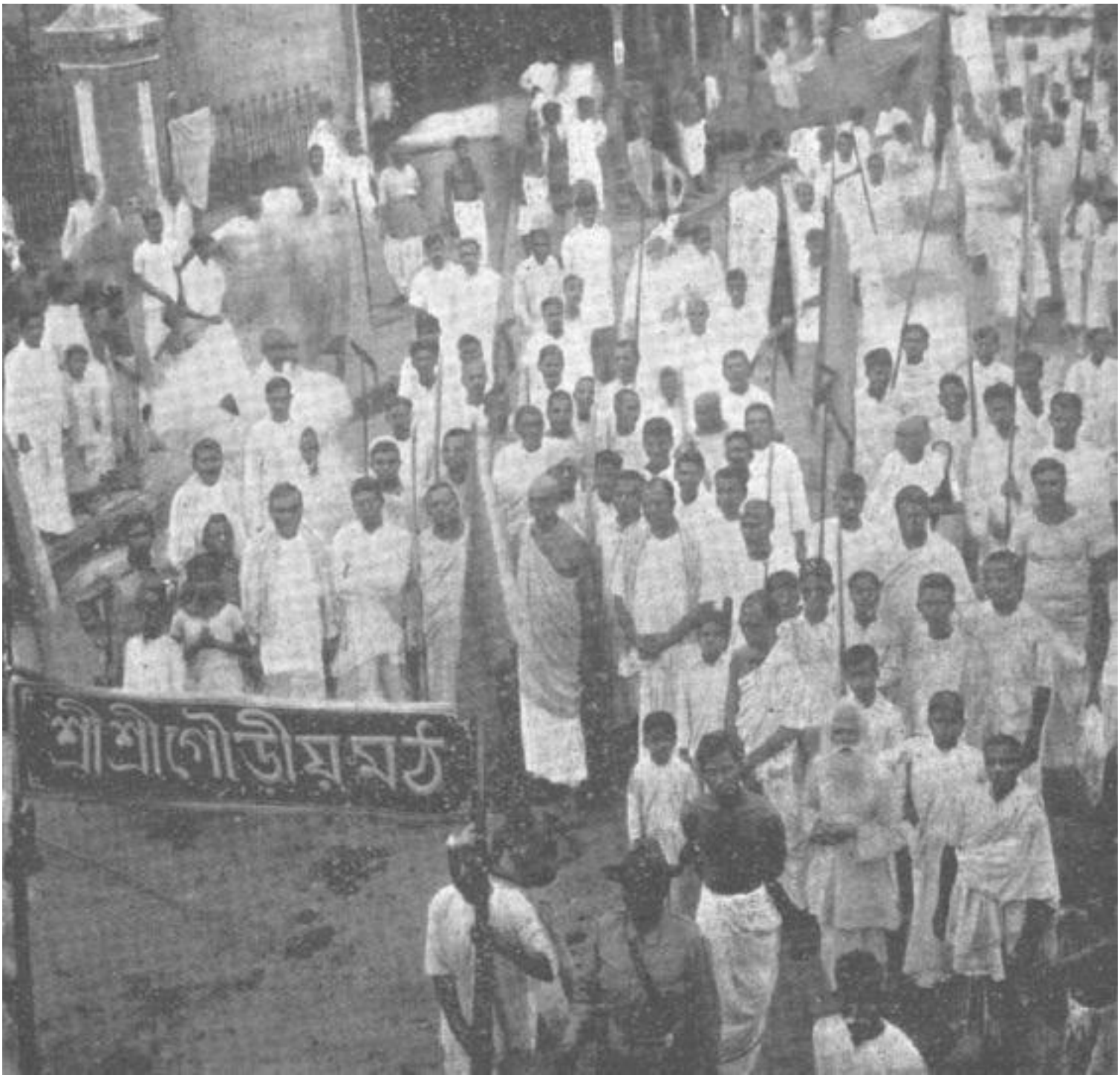
The groundbreaking function for Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Calcutta (p. 91)

Outside the Bhaktivinoda Āsana at Ultadingi Road. Upon a chariot, Śrīman Mahāprabhu and Śrī Śrī Giridhārī-Gāndharvikā await going to Their new residence at Bāg-bazar. (p. 92)

Saṅkīrtana during the Gauḍīya Maṭha Festival in Calcutta (pp. 92–93)



Saṅkīrtana during the Gauḍīya Maṭha Festival in Calcutta (pp. 92–93)



Saṅkīrtana during the Gauḍīya Maṭha Festival in Calcutta (pp. 92–93)

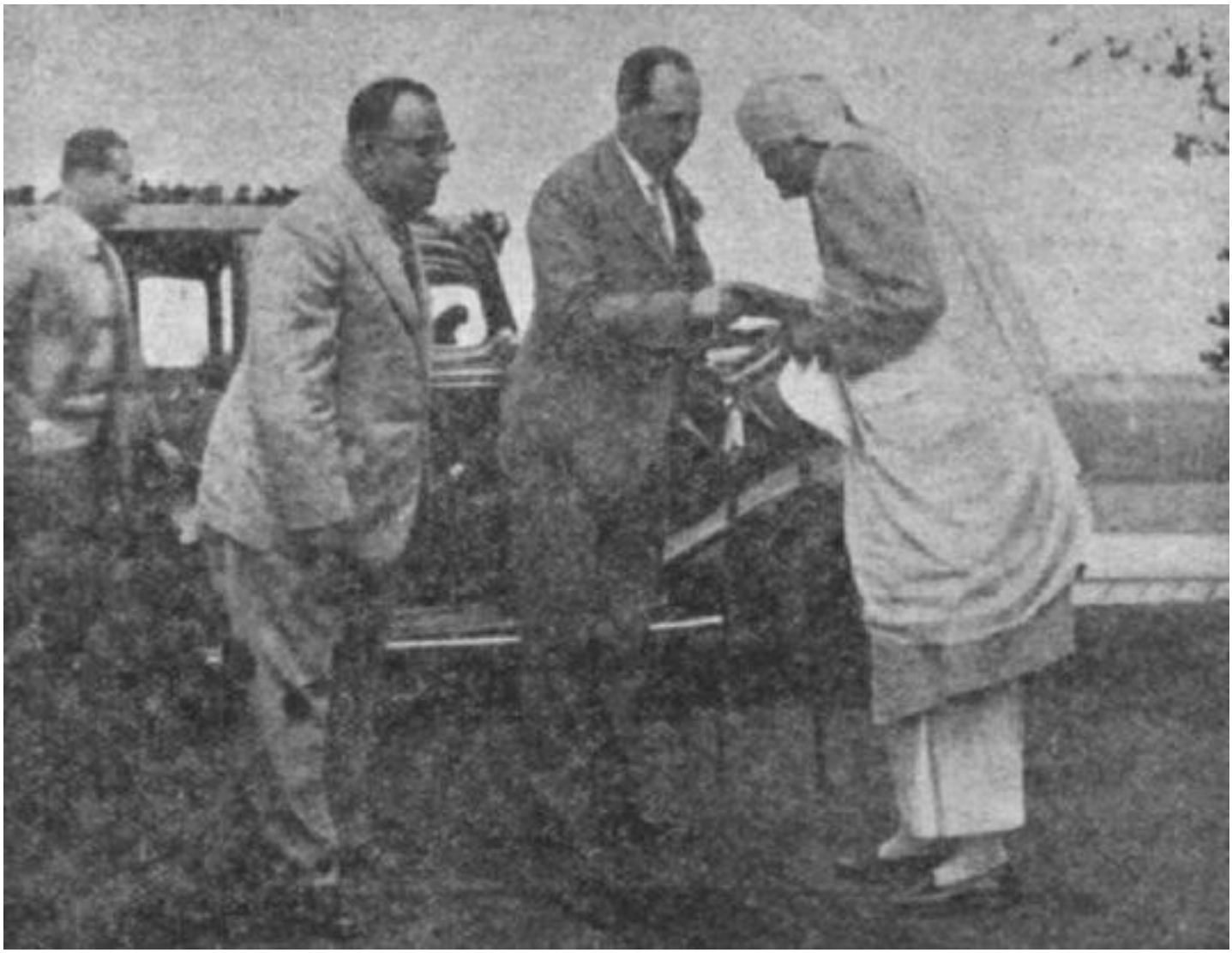
Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Bāg-bazar, Calcutta

Reciting *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* at Śukatala

In Delhi during the installation of the deity

Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga–Vinoda-Govindānanda Jīu, Patna

Śrī Kāmiṇī-mohana Rāya Choudhary, Śrī Mana-mohana Rāya Choudhary, and Śrī Satya-mohana Rāya Choudhary, from the zamindar family of Baliyati, Dacca district

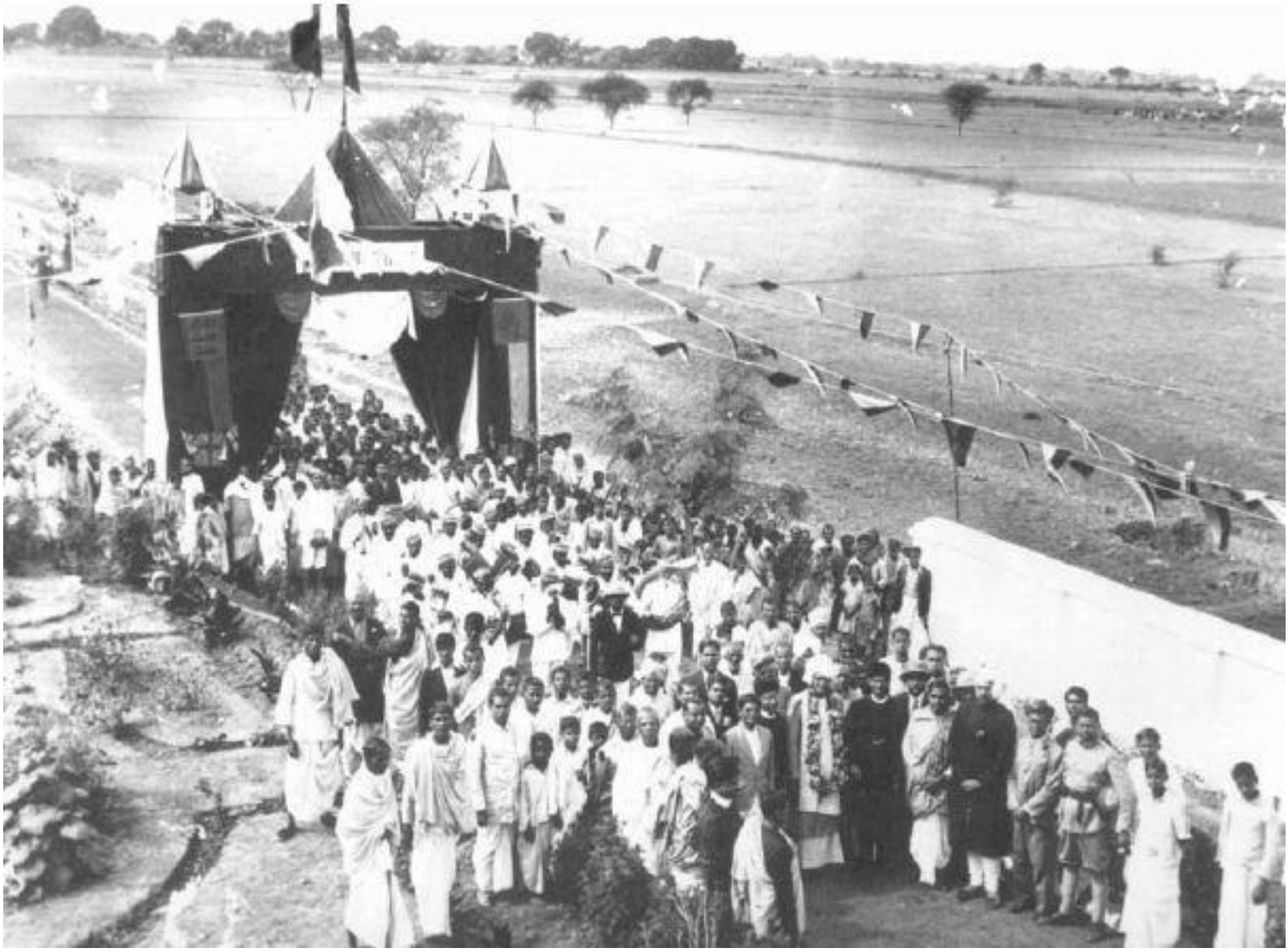


Welcoming Sir John Anderson, the governor of Bengal, on his arrival in Māyāpur (p. 109)

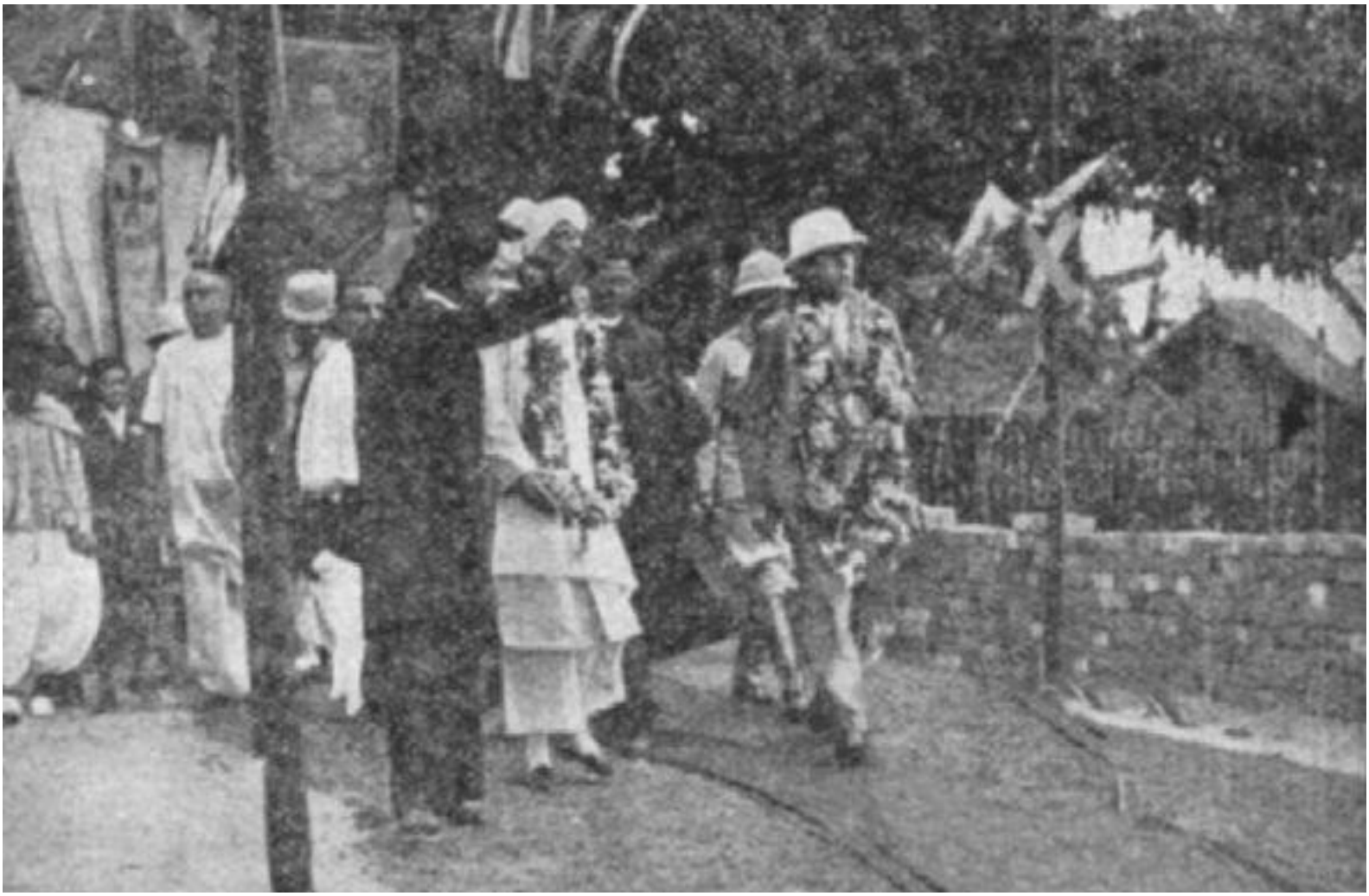
With the governor in Māyāpur

GOD BLESS THE KING

With the governor on Advaita Saraṇī

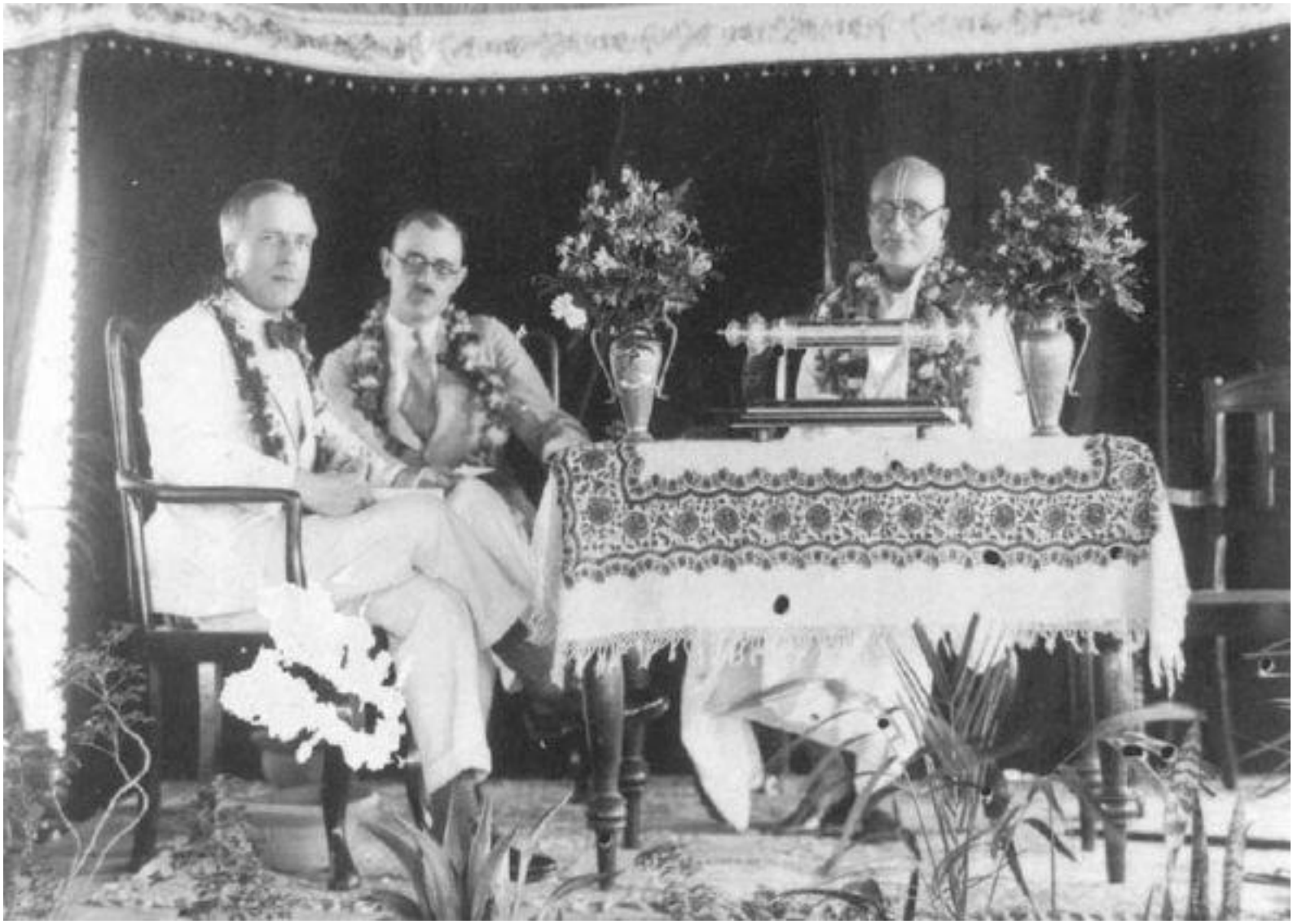


Entering Śrī Caitanya Maṭha with Sir John Anderson



Śrī Kuñja Bihārī Vidyābhūṣaṇa (“booted and suited”) indicating the Thakur Bhakti Vinode Institute

With dignitaries during the governor's visit



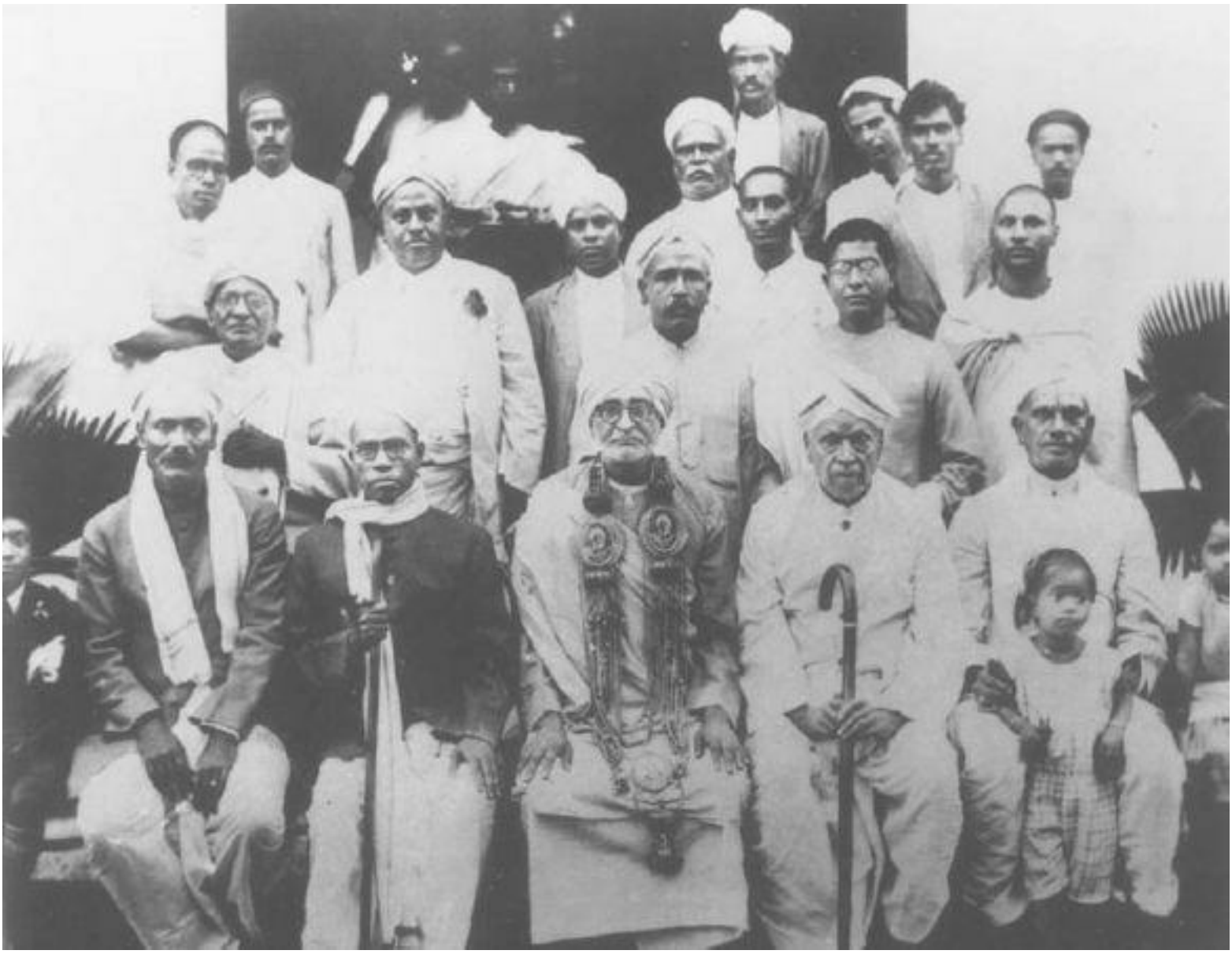
At a function held in April 1935 on a plot adjoining the newly donated land for the Mādhva Gauḍīya Maṭha. To Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's immediate right is Mr. E.B.H. Baker, I.C.S., district judge of Dacca; next is Mr. J.R. Blair, I.C.S., magistrate of Dacca. On the table is a silver casket containing a congratulatory letter from the citizens of Dacca.

The last Vyāsa-*pūjā,* at Śrīvāsa Aṅgana, February 1936 (p. 115)

En route to Naimiṣāraṇya

Arrival at Central Station, Madras, January 1932 (p. 240)

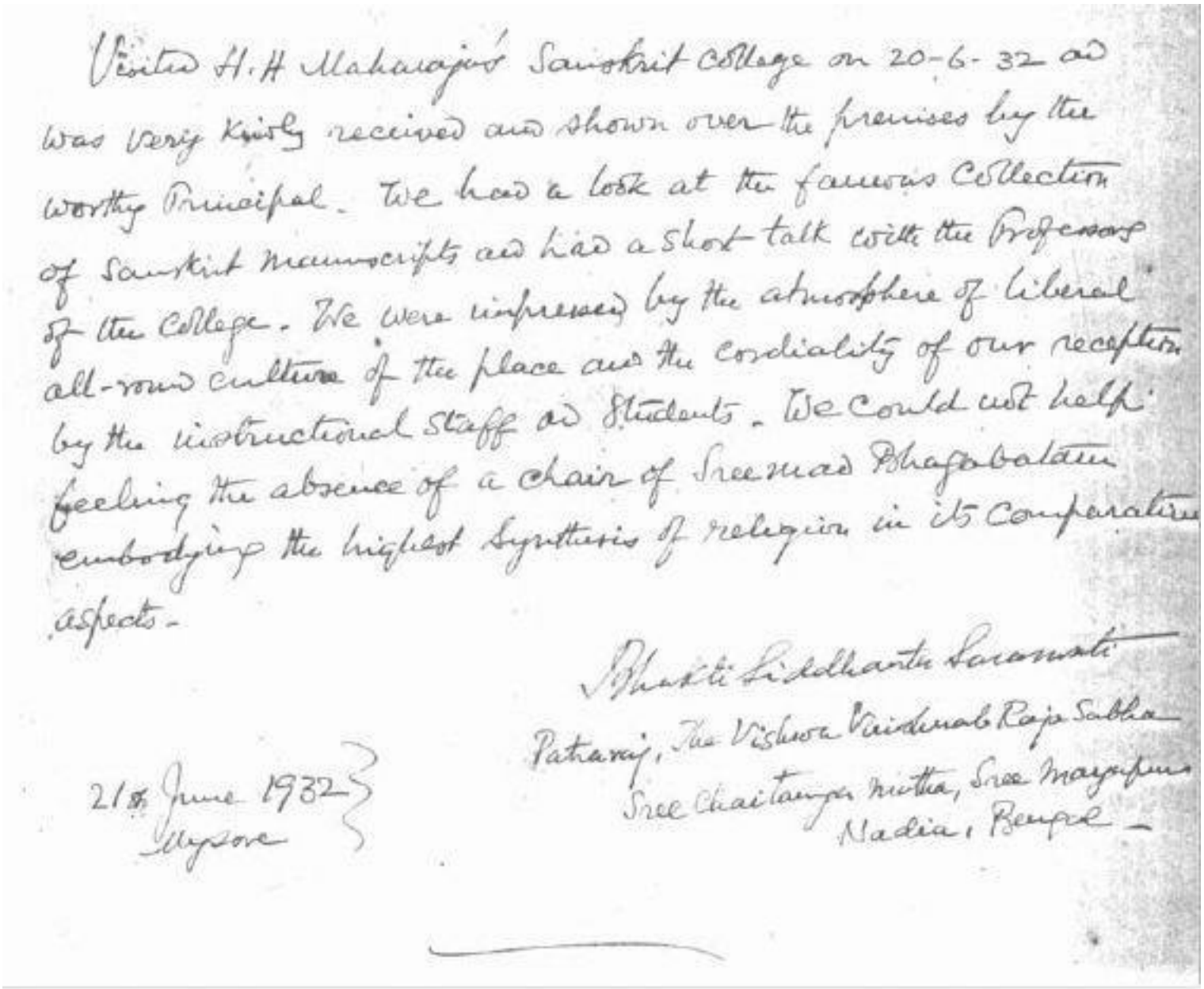
Reception by Madras Corporation (p. 240)



At the foundation-laying ceremony of the Kṛṣṇa-kīrtana Hall in Madras (p. 241)

Madras Gauḍīya Maṭha

At a devotee's home in Madras

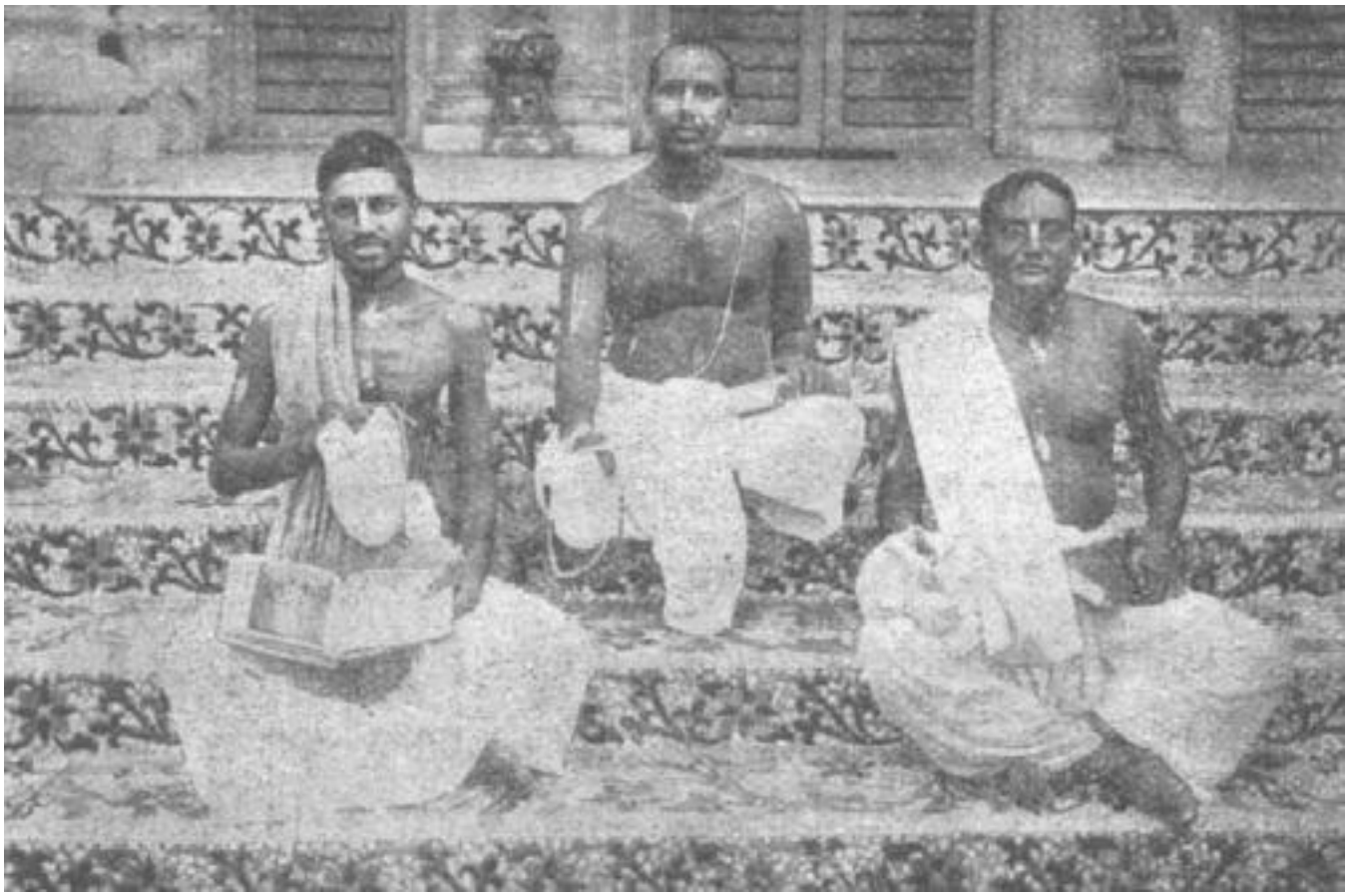


Visited H.H Maharajas Sanskrit College on 20-6-32 and was very kindly received and shown over the premises by the worthy Principal. We had a look at the famous Collection of Sanskrit manuscripts and had a short talk with the Professors of the College. We were impressed by the atmosphere of liberal all-round culture of the place and the cordiality of our reception by the instructional staff and Students. We could not help feeling the absence of a chair of Sreemad Bhagabatam embodying the highest Systhesis of religion in its Comparative aspects.

Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati
Patharaj, The Vishwa Vaishnab Raja Sabha
Sree Chaitanya Matha, Sree Mayapur
Nadia, Bengal.

21st June 1932
Mysore

Mysore guest book entry (pp. 243–44)



Śrī Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda, editor of *Gauḍīya;* Śrī Haripada Vidyāratna, superintendent of the *Gauḍīya* editorial board; Śrī Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī, chairman of the *Gauḍīya* editorial board.

শ্রীশ্রীগুরুগৌরাঙ্গৌ জয়তঃ

১২শ খণ্ড | শ্রীগৌড়ীয় মঠ, শনিবার, ২৪শে ভাদ্র, ১৩৪০ ; ৯ই সেপ্টেম্বর, ১৯৩৩ | ৬ষ্ঠ সংখ্যা

ব্যষ্টি ও গোষ্ঠিগত ভজন

১২শ বর্ষের "গৌড়ীয়ে"র ৪৮শ সংখ্যায় "প্রচার ও ব্যক্তিগত সাধক-জীবনে বিবর্ত্ত" প্রমুখ প্রবন্ধে যে-সকল কথা বলা হইয়াছে, তাহা পাঠ করিয়া আমাদের ক-য় যোগ্যতানুযায়ী আমরা বিকৃত ধারণা পোষণ না করিয়া বসি এবং প্রচার বা প্রতিষ্ঠানের সেবার তুলনায় ব্যক্তিগত সাধক-জীবনের অবশ্য পালনীয় মঙ্গলময় আচার-সমূহ বিসর্জ্জন না দেই, এজন্যই এই প্রবন্ধের অবতারণা।

অর্ব্বাচীন অভক্ত-সম্প্রদায় যেমন একদিকে হরিকথা-প্রচারের মূল উদ্দেশ্য বুঝিতে না পারিয়া অন্যায়, অবৈধ, অনধিকারী সমালোচক হইয়া পড়ে, তেমনই আবার অনর্থ-যুক্ত সাধক-জীব মহাভক্ত আচার্য্যের অনুকরণ করিতে গিয়া প্রচারের বা প্রতিষ্ঠানের আনুকূল্যের তুলনায় ব্যক্তিগত সাধক-জীবনকে বিপদ্‌গ্রস্ত ও পীড়িত করিয়া ফেলিবার যোগ্যতা সংরক্ষণ করে।

প্রচার বা প্রতিষ্ঠানকে আনুকূল্য করিবার ছলে সাধকগণ যদি বৈধীভক্তির শাসনগুলিকে উল্লঙ্ঘন করেন, তাহা হইলে প্রচার-সেবার তুলনায় কেবল যে ব্যক্তিগত সাধক-জীবন পীড়িত হইবার সম্ভাবনা আছে, তাহা নহে,—ব্যষ্টির পাপ ও অপরাধ গোষ্ঠীর মধ্যেও ক্রমে ক্রমে সঞ্চারিত ও সংক্রামিত হইয়া গোষ্ঠীকে ধ্বংসের দিকে প্রধাবিত করিয়া থাকে।

বস্তুতঃ বৈষ্ণবধর্ম্ম সম্পূর্ণ ব্যক্তিনিষ্ঠ-ধর্ম্ম। ব্যক্তিগত সাধকজীবন সর্ব্বতোভাবে আদর্শ না হইলে—সর্ব্বতোভাবে শ্রীগুরু-বৈষ্ণব ও বৈষ্ণবধর্ম্মের আনুগত্যপূর্ণ ও অনুমোদিত

A front page of the *Gauḍīya*

ALL GLORY TO THE DIVINE MASTER
AND
THE SUPREME LORD SREE KRISHNA CHAITANYA

THE HARMONIST

OR

SHREE SAJJANATOSHANI

VOL. XXIX | FEBRUARY 1932, Chaitanya-Era 445 | NO. 8.

Sanatan Dharma

Lectures at Bani-Bhaban

(Benares City)

THERE was a large gathering of residents and visitors at Bani-Bhaban on the 18th Nov. 31, to listen to the lectures that had been arranged to be delivered by the Bengali Tola Durga Puja association. The speakers were His Holiness Tridandi Swami Sreemad Bon Maharaj, Pandit Sripad Sundaranande Vidyavinode, B. A., Editor of the Gaudiya and His Divine Grace Paribrajakacharyya Sri Srimad Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Maharaj, Acharyya of the Gaudiya Vaishnava Community, Who follows the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna Chaitanya. His Divine Grace was President of the meeting. The Subject of the discourse was 'Sanatan Dharma' (the eternal natural function of the soul).

After Srimad Bon Maharaj and Sripad Sundaranande Vidyavinode had placed before the audience the general bearings of the subject by their respective speeches the President delivered his learned discourse. A few of the points of the lecture which took about two hours in delivery are presented in the following imperfect summary.

The speaker introduced himself as one who is 'meanest of the mean' in the language of one of his superiors, the Acharyyas, who had adequately dealt

A front page of the *Harmonist*

শ্রীশ্রীহরিলোকাকো জয়তঃ

দৈনিক নদীয়া-প্রকাশ

একমাত্র পারমার্থিক

দৈনিক পত্র

শ্রীধাম-মায়াপুর-নদীয়া

সপ্তম বর্ষ	১১ গোবিন্দ গৌরাব্দ ৪৪৮, ২০শে ভাদ্র বঙ্গাব্দ ১৩৩৮, ৩১ মার্চ ইং ১৯৩২ শুক্রবার	২য় সংখ্যা

আজ্ঞা-প্রচারে শ্রীশ্রীব্যাসপূজা

শ্রীধামমায়াপুর অন্তর্গত শ্রীজন্মস্থান। শ্রীমন্দিরের আদ্যোপান্তসহিতাধিকারী শ্রীজগদ্গুরু। আই পাত্র যথন:—

"কৃষ্ণ যদি কৃপা করে কোন ভাগ্যবানে।
গুরু অন্তর্যামী রূপে শিখায় আপনে॥"

গত ১৩ই ভাদ্র বঙ্গাব্দ ৭ই সেপ্টেম্বর পরমারাধ্য আচার্যবর্য অষ্টোত্তরশতশ্রী-শ্রীমদ্ভক্তিবিনোদ ঠাকুরের তিরোভাব-তিথি-বাসরের শুভ প্রাক্কালে-ব্যাস পূজা। ঐ দিবস শ্রীজন্মস্থানীয় পূজা শ্রীমন্দিরে যথা ও অন্যান্য শাখা-মঠসমূহে সাড়ম্বর অনুষ্ঠিত হইয়াছে। শুধু মায়াপুরে নহে শ্রীজগদ্গুরুপাদপদ্মের সকল আচার্যগণই যে যেখানে আছেন সেইখানে থাকিয়াই শ্রীব্যাসপূজা করিয়াছেন।

মেদিনীপুর জেলার বাগ্‌বাগান গ্রামে প্রচারকার্য্য অবসরকালে ত্রিবিক্রমী শ্রীমদ্ভক্তিবিবেক ভারতী মহারাজ, পরিব্রাজ শ্রীযুক্ত নিত্যানন্দ ব্রহ্মচারী প্রভৃতি শ্রীগৌরভক্তের সমভিব্যাহারে বাগ্‌বাগান বলরাম, ডাকরাজা, বাগনান, আমতলি, তুষারোলী, তুলসীডিহা, মেদিনীপুরী প্রভৃতি গ্রামবাসী ভক্তবৃন্দের নিকট, আচার্যরূপে শ্রীব্যাসপূজা করিয়াছেন।

পূর্ণ রাত্রি অধিবাস কীর্তন হয়। উক্ত দিবস উষায় ঐকান্তিকভাবে মাধ্যাহ্নিক সেবা-যোগাযোগ পর্যন্ত অবিরত কীর্তন হইয়াছিল। পরে ২টা হইতে বিরাট্ নগর কীর্তন, ওজস্বিনী গান ও গুরুদাসাত্ম কীর্তনের শ্রীমন্দিরাগমনের ক্রমে অপরাহ্ণ ৪ ঘটিকায় সমাপ্তি হয়। সঙ্কীর্তন, মাধুরী, মিশ্রী, ইংরেজি আদির ৪টী অধিবেশন পরে, মধ্যে মধ্যে কীর্তন এবং বক্তৃতা হয়। রাত্রি ৯—১০টায় শ্রীব্যাসপূজার শ্রীগুরু-পাদপদ্ম পুষ্পাঞ্জলি প্রদান, এবং ১০০টী হইতে ১২টা পর্যন্ত ভোগ ও মোগারতি কীর্তন হয়। ৭৪০ প্রকার ভোগ উপকরণ সমৃদ্ধ সুষ্ঠুভাবে সাজান হইয়াছিল। অন্যান্য সময়ের সঙ্কীর্তনই রাত্রি ১০—১২টা হইতে ৪টা পর্যন্ত বিভিন্ন মহাজনের গানে অনুষ্ঠিত হয়। নিম্ন লিখিত ব্যক্তিগণ অপূর্ব এবং অভিনব মহাভাবের ভোগে গায়কমণ্ডলিকে হইয়াছেন। উদ্বোধন সঙ্গীত হয় ঘরে শ্রীযুক্ত কৃষ্ণকুমারাধিকারী ঠিকা-গান করিয়াছেন। তাঁহারই কণ্ঠে শ্রীগুরুই আচার্যের গুরু ও বৈষ্ণবগণের এই কয়টী মূলমন্ত্র হইয়াছে।

শ্রীজগদ্গুরুর সকলেই সেবা করিয়াছেন কতৃক ভাবভক্তিরসের মর্ম উদ্ঘাটনে।

গায়কগণ—শ্রীযুক্ত ত্রৈলোক্যনাথ ব্রহ্মচারী ও বৈষ্ণব দাস। পুষ্পাধিকারে পরিব্রাজ শ্রীপাদ নিত্যানন্দ ব্রহ্মচারী। উক্ত কার্যে সহায়তাকল্পে শ্রীযুক্ত মুরলীবিহারী ধামাধিকারী, যোগপীঠস্থ ব্রহ্মচারী, ভক্তবৃন্দ ধামাধিকারী এবং ধামবাসী ধামাধিকারী।

সেবা তালিকা

১। বন্দ ব্রহ্মচারীর
২। বন্দনা
৩। ভক্তিক গান
৪। একতালা গান
৫। বাঙ্গুর অধিবাস—কলসী—শ্রীমদ্ভক্তিবিবেক ভারতী মহারাজ
৬। ইংরেজি অধিবেশন—শ্রীনিত্যানন্দ ব্রহ্মচারী
৭। হিন্দি অধিবেশন—শ্রীবিবেক ভারতী
৮। অতিরিক্ত বৃন্দাবলি (নূতন গড় গান) শ্রীবিবেক ভারতী।
৯। পুষ্পাঞ্জলি—শ্রীমুরলীবিহারী ধামাধিকারী
১০। প্রভাতী (ঠুংরি)—শ্রীত্রৈলোক্য দাস
১১। প্রভাতী—শ্রীকৃষ্ণকুমার ধামাধিকারী
১২। গান—"এবার দুর্মতি আমার কিসে"
১৩। অতিরিক্ত বৃন্দাবলি (নূতন)—শ্রীগোপীরমণ ব্রহ্মচারী।
১৪। অতিরিক্ত বৃন্দাবলি—শ্রীমন্মাধবেন্দ্র দাস
১৫। নীলের অর্ঘ্য—শ্রীগোপীজনবল্লভ ব্রহ্মচারী
১৬। বন্দনা—শ্রীবিবেক ভারতী
১৭। গান—"ভজরে। হৃদয়ানন্দ নিতাই"
১৮। অতিরিক্তবৃন্দাবলি—শ্রীগোপাল ব্রহ্মচারী
১৯। নিত্যবর—শ্রীহরিদাস মুখোপাধ্যায়
২০। অর্ঘ্যারতি—শ্রীব্যাসমন্দির ধামাধিকারী (কেশিয়াড়ী)
২১। গান—"জয়ে জয়ে জয়"
২২। আরতি-পূজা—শ্রীমায়াপুর ধাম অধিকারী
২৩। আরাত্রিকি—শ্রীমায়াপুর ধামাধিকারী
২৪। মূল অর্ঘ্য—শ্রীবৈদ্যনাথ দাস
২৫। গান—"বিষাদে গায়কগণ"
২৬। বৈষ্ণবপ্রণামাদি—শ্রীবৈদ্যনাথ ধামাধিকারী (বাগবা)
২৭। প্রণামাদি—(বঙ্গ) শ্রীহরেন্দ্র নাথ
২৮। পুষ্পাঞ্জলি—শ্রীমান নাথ
২৯। গান—"শ্রীগুরুচরণ-পদ্ম"
৩০। বাসের অর্ঘ্য—শ্রীকৃষ্ণসুন্দর ধামাধিকারী
৩১। ভজনী—শ্রীমণিলাল দাস
৩২। পরিক্রমার কীর্তন—শ্রীমোহনলাল চক্র দাস (বাগবা)
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৪৩। বক্তৃতা—শ্রীবিবেক ভারতী
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৪৬। ভোগ
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৪৮। মহাপ্রসাদ বিতরণ

A front page of the *Nadia Prakash*

॥ श्री श्रीगुरुगौराङ्गौ जयतः ॥

कृष्णे स्वधामोपगते धर्म्मज्ञानादिभिः सह। कलौ नष्टदृशामेषः समाचारोऽधुनोदितः॥

वर्ष ४ | श्रीगौड़ीय मठ, मीठापुर (पटना) | भाद्र कृष्ण ५, सं० १९९५ वि०, १६ वीं अगस्त १९३८ | संख्या ७

प्रह्लाद-चरित्र

प्रह्लाद महाराज एक उच्चकोटि के भक्त थे। उनका परिचय हिन्दुस्थान में किसी को अज्ञात नहीं है। तथापि भक्तों का गुण कीर्त्तन करने से हमलोगों की आत्मा पवित्र होती है, इसी विचार से उनके चरितामृत के आस्वादन की लालसा हुई है।

दैत्यराज हिरण्यकशिपु के चार पुत्रों में से प्रह्लाद सर्वश्रेष्ठ थे। उनका गुण अतुलनीय था जिससे भक्त लोग भी उनकी उपासना करते थे। वह सत्यवादी, जितेन्द्रिय, सर्व-प्रिय और सुहृत थे। भक्तों के समस्त गुण उनमें पूर्णतया विराजते थे। शत्रु भी उनकी भक्ति की तारीफ करते थे। वह बचपन से ही क्रीड़ा की सामग्री छोड़कर श्रीभगवच्चरणारविन्द में तल्लीन रहते थे, इस वजह से इस दुनियां की खबर उनके समीप नहीं पहुँचती थी।

प्रह्लाद के पिता ने दैत्यकुल के अन्यान्य बालकों के साथ पण्डित षण्डामर्क के समीप प्रह्लाद के अध्ययन का भी बन्दोबस्त किया था। किन्तु प्रह्लाद, अपना मन सर्वदा भगवत्-चिन्तन में तत्पर रहने के कारण पाठ में ध्यान नहीं देते थे और भगवत्-सम्बन्ध-रहित शिक्षा उनके मन पर असर नहीं कर सकी। केवल पिता की आज्ञा पालन करने के लिये गुरु के पास पढ़ते थे।

एक दिन हिरण्यकशिपु ने प्रह्लाद को गोद में लेकर पूछा—"वत्स! तुम्हारे विचार से जो श्रेष्ठ

A front page of the *Bhāgavata*

Three

Early Days of the Mission

Sannyāsa and Śrī Caitanya Maṭha

In 1914, just a few weeks before passing away, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had expressed his *mano-'bhīṣṭa* to Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī, instructing him to establish *daiva-varṇāśrama,* preach *śuddha-bhakti,* develop Śrīdhāma Māyāpur, and publish Vaiṣṇava writings:

> Worldly people who are proud of their aristocratic birth cannot attain to actual aristocracy. Therefore they attack pure Vaiṣṇavas, claiming that they have taken birth in low-class families because of their sins. Thus they commit offenses. The means to rectify this situation is to institute *daiva-varṇāśrama-dharma.* You have started to do that. Know it to be real service to Vaiṣṇavas.
>
> Due to lack of *śuddha-bhakti-siddhānta pracāra,* all manner of womanish bad theories and instructions are being called devotion by pseudo-*sampradāyas* such as *sahajiyā* and *ativāḍī.* Always crush these anti-devotional conceptions by *bhakti-siddhānta pracāra* and proper *ācāra.* Try to begin the *parikramā* of Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa as soon as possible. Thereby everyone in the universe can receive Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti.* Diligently endeavor to ensure that service to Śrī Māyāpur becomes permanently established and more resplendent each day. Genuine service to Śrī Māyāpur is not *nirjana-bhajana,* but to establish a printing press and to propagate devotional books and Nāma-haṭṭa. Do not for your own sake undertake *nirjana-bhajana* and thus impede preaching and service to Śrī Māyāpur.
>
> When I am no longer present, take care to serve your dear Śrī Māyāpur-*dhāma.* This is my special instruction to you. People who are like animals can never attain devotion; never accept their advice. But do not let them know this, either directly or indirectly.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī

I had a special desire to propagate the importance of such books as *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,*

> *Ṣaṭ-sandarbha,* and *Vedānta-darśana*. Now you must assume that responsibility. Śrī Māyāpur will prosper if you inaugurate an educational institution there.
>
> Never try to amass knowledge or money for your own sense gratification; they should be acquired only for Kṛṣṇa's service. Never take bad association, either for money or any personal interest.[*]

The time had come for Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī to realize this mandate. Even during his years of withdrawn *bhajana* in Māyāpur, he had always meditated on fulfilling the desires of his gurus by undertaking to make *śuddha-bhakti* available to all humankind. It was for this that he had come to the world, been trained by his pure devotee father, made extensive studies and research, and performed severe austerities. Even his polemic encounters in astronomy had helped ready him for similar battles concerning matters of even greater spheres beyond.

Now fully prepared, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī began a new chapter in his life: wholesale war on *māyā*. He inaugurated it by taking *sannyāsa* on Gaura-*jayantī,* 27 March 1918, in Vrajapattana, having spent the previous day incessantly chanting *harināma,* his head covered with a cloth. Seeing no one suitable to act as his *sannyāsa*-guru, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī accepted *sannyāsa* by taking a *tridaṇḍa* and sitting in meditation in front of a picture of Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja. Thus at age forty-four Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī became Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī. Consequently his disciples, well-wishers, and friends became overwhelmed with grief, as had Caitanya Mahāprabhu's associates upon His taking *sannyāsa.* And the pilgrims present for the Gaura-*pūrṇimā* festival joined Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's direct followers in wailing and crying.[†]

On the day he took *sannyāsa,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī also established the Śrī Caitanya Maṭha in Māyāpur, revealing service to the deities Śrī Śrī Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī alongside the deity of Lord Caitanya before whom he had performed his vow of chanting a billion names.[*] Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī remained in Māyāpur for some days to oversee the newly inaugurated deity service, and then ventured into the preaching field.

He already knew many people receptive to his message, including followers of his exalted father and those contacted during his own initial preaching forays. Now, with the assistance of the growing group of talented young men living with him in Māyāpur, he wanted to systematically expand the preaching. Among them Śrīpāda Paramānanda, Śrīpāda Kuñja Bihārī, Śrīpāda Jagadīśa, Śrīpāda Ananta Vāsudeva, and Śrīpāda Vinoda Bihārī were, from the beginning, leaders of his mission and pivotal in its development. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī started his movement with these few helpers and practically no funds—but with quite a few enemies. The majority of these initial adherents were from comfortable backgrounds, yet they voluntarily embraced poverty to inherit the abundant spiritual riches offered by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.

At the end of March at Krishnanagar Town Hall, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura gave an exhaustively researched lecture titled “Vaiṣṇava Darśana.” In May 1918, he spent ten days with several

disciples at a Vaiṣṇava conference in Daulatpur Prapannāśrama (near Khulna), where he initiated two new disciples and established a Bhaktivinoda Āsana as a center for Vaiṣṇava gatherings and propagation of *śuddha-bhakti.* One respected resident of Daulatpur, Paṇḍita Śrī Rāma Gopāla Vidyābhūṣaṇa, dressed fashionably and sported a French-cut beard. From early youth he had been addicted to tobacco chewing, and every few minutes popped more into his mouth. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura told him, "The Vaiṣṇavas will prepare and give you the most fragrant varieties of tobacco from India and throughout the world, which you may bring one hundred yards away into the field and offer to Kṛṣṇa. All intoxicants are under Kṛṣṇa's monopoly, to be accepted only as ingredients for His enjoyment. By trying to enjoy that meant for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure, the *jīva* becomes a slave of intoxication. If we offer tobacco to Kṛṣṇa, His senses are satisfied, but if we enjoy it ourselves, it will gradually reduce our sensory potency and humanness."[*] These words pierced the heart of the *paṇḍita,* who thereupon quit forever both his lifelong tobacco habit and his fashionable style of dress, instead donning simple dhoti and *pāñjābī.*

After returning to Māyāpur, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī went to Calcutta on 7 June and performed several programs of Hari-*kathā* and *nāma-kīrtana* in the homes of respectable people. Then he led a group of twenty-three disciples on a pilgrimage-cum-preaching tour to Orissa, culminating with participation in Lord Jagannātha's Ratha-yātrā in Purī.[†] Upon returning to Calcutta about a month later, he skirmished with a foolhardy rascal who presented twenty-nine provocative questions concerning the history and relationship between Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī, and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī himself. In a meeting convened in the house of a gentleman who had been a follower of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī furiously routed and silenced the antagonist.

Getting Established in Calcutta

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura already had a base in Māyāpur, the most important place in the universe, and was committed to developing it, but he also felt the need to preach in Calcutta. In those days Māyāpur was remote and surrounded by jungle, whereas Calcutta was a multitudinous and fashionable metropolis throbbing with cultural and intellectual verve.

It was said, "What Bengal thinks today, others will think tomorrow."[‡] And Calcutta was the fulcrum of a Bengal and an India immersed in tradition yet tipping toward the new, an India not only befuddled about her own culture, but moreover exposed to modern breeds of bemusement. Although till recently it had been the seat of the Raj and was still lauded as the gem crowning the vast overseas possessions of mighty Britain, Calcutta was also the volatile center of opposition to foreign rule. Thus it was an ideal locus for propaganda efforts, and much in need of it. Both British and Indians alike had to be informed that bodily differences of nationality and race were insignificant, everyone being intimately related as eternal servants of the supreme proprietor of all nations, and that adjustments on the material plane are temporary and therefore useless.

Not only was this message unique and timely, but the very endeavor to widely disseminate pure Vaiṣṇava dharma was extraordinary. Extensive propagation of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism had petered out after the time of Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, three hundred years before. The recent proselytical attempts by Caraṇa dāsa Bābājī and his followers had been successful only in adding to the confusion regarding the true spirit of Lord Caitanya's mission, which remained for Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura to revive. And while Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had been an inspired yet cautious reformer, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was a revolutionary determined to resume the preaching mission on a scale never before imagined.

In the months after establishing Śrī Caitanya Maṭha at Māyāpur, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura sometimes came to Calcutta for short visits, during which he gave lectures at Bhakti Bhavan. A regular listener, Śrī Śrīśa Rāya Chaudhuri, once supplicated him, "Your doctrine of Mahāprabhu is certainly glorious, powerful, and unparalleled, but how many seekers will come to Māyāpur to hear you? Calcutta is a huge cosmopolitan city with people from all over the world. If we can arrange for you to stay here, faithful persons from diverse places will have the good fortune to hear you."

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī acceded, and by November 1918 Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu, assisted by Śrīśa Babu and others, had located a suitable house at 1 Ultadingi Junction Road, just a hundred yards from the spectacular landmark Pārśvanātha Jain temple.[*] Although Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī established several more Bhaktivinoda Āsanas before founding the Gauḍīya Maṭha, this one in Calcutta became known among his followers as *the* Bhaktivinoda Āsana, it being the hive of an inchoate preaching movement.[‡] On ground level was a large room utilized for guest reception. The first floor housed four *gṛhastha* disciples—Śrīpāda Kuñja Bihārī Vidyābhūṣaṇa, Śrīpāda Jagadīśa Bhakti Pradīpa, Śrīpāda Haripada Vidyāratna

Kavi-bhūṣaṇa, and Śrīpāda Yaśodānandana Bhāgavata Bhūṣaṇa—and their families. On the roof terrace, which could seat about 250, was another chamber where Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī stayed with his treasured collection of books and manuscripts, which he frequently consulted for references to support points he was speaking or writing on. Although the rent of fifty rupees per month was far beyond the means of the householders residing there, with characteristic confidence Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī told them to depend on Kṛṣṇa, according to the maxim that he would reiterate throughout his life: "Don't worry for money. Preach, and money will come." Kuñja Babu then committed to pay half, the balance to be covered by the others.

Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu also undertook the management of Bhaktivinoda Āsana. On his invitation several well-known and learned men came to hear Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, and the editors of the English daily newspapers *Amrita Bazar Patrika* and the *Bengali* regularly featured his discourses in their publications. The *Bengali* introduced the Bhaktivinoda Āsana:

> His Holiness the celebrated Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura of Śrī Māyāpur (Nadia) has recently set up the Calcutta Bhaktivinoda Āsana at No. 1 Ultadingi Junction Road, Gouribari (near the Paresh Nath *[sic]* temple) with some devotees for the preaching of true Vaiṣṇavism and to guard credulous people against false doctrines passing under the garb of Vaiṣṇava faith for long, owing to the popular ignorance of the Vaiṣṇava philosophy. His Holiness will always receive sincerely inquisitive visitors at the above address and explain to them and discuss with them as to what is really the most reasonable form of religion for the world's people.[1]

During the day, continuous study of scriptural texts was conducted in the presence of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Although activities at Ultadingi Road had started with but few followers, his unflagging preaching attracted ever more listeners, and gradually the number of his disciples and admirers increased. Amid the swirl of activities, writing and publishing were not neglected —within a year of instituting this Bhaktivinoda Āsana six books were produced. Deity service and other activities of the embryonic Calcutta Maṭha were supported by begging door to door.[*]

In December 1918, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī continued his assault against the cheating of the caste Goswamis by fearlessly touring the districts of Jessore and Khulna in the company of ten devotees. Jessore was home to numerous *smārta-brāhmaṇas* and also to Priyanātha Nandī, the principal spokesman of the *jāta-gosāñis.* Nandī's guru had given him the title Bhaktivinoda, but Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī commisioned articles controverting that a counterfeit devotee was using the appellation of a contemporary *mahā-bhāgavata.* Nandī had reciprocally published many challenges to and ad hominem criticisms of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī in his journal *Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Tattva-pracāraka*. Two of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's disciples, Śrī Gaura Govinda Vidyābhūṣaṇa and Śrī Priyanātha Mukherji, had responded with a book titled *Pratīpa-priyanāthera-pratyuttara* (A reply to the opponent Priyanātha).[*] Ultimately Nandī was overcome by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī in a showdown in a Jessore village. The triumphant expedition concluded on 1 January 1919 with gala *saṅkīrtana* in the town of

Bongaon, following which the party returned to the Bhaktivinoda Āsana.

The Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā

On 5 February 1919, the *āvirbhāva-tithi* of Śrī Viṣṇupriyā devī, at the Ultadingi Junction Road center Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura reestablished Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's Viśva-Vaiṣṇava Sabhā as the Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā. During the inauguration ceremony he gave a short history of the *sabhā,* a summary of which was printed in *Sajjana-toṣaṇī:*

> On the recent appearance day of Śrī Viṣṇupriyā, many pure devotees convened at the Calcutta Śrī Bhaktivinoda Āsana and reestablished the Śrī Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā. Even though this *sabhā* is eternally established, it has descended into the world three times. Eleven years after the disappearance of Mahāprabhu, when the world was beginning to darken, six brilliant stars remained arisen in Śrī Vraja-*maṇḍala* and were engaged in the service of Gauracandra's Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā. Apart from them, several other mahatmas, headed by Śrīla Bhūgarbha Gosvāmī, Śrīla Lokanātha Gosvāmī, and Śrīla Kāśīśvara Gosvāmī, beautified Śrī Gauracandra's Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā. Sixty-four dear associates of Śrī Gaurasundara, and the twelve friends of Śrīla Nityānanda Prabhu, increased the beauty of this Śrī Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā. Śrīla Nityānanda Prabhu's Nāma-haṭṭa was a main branch of the Śrī Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā.
>
> Śrī Śrī Bhagavat Kṛṣṇa Caitanya-deva is the purifier of Kali-yuga. He is the teacher who gives knowledge (*sambandha*) of the method to worship Himself, the original form of Godhead, who ascertains the path of devotional service in practice (*abhidheya*) and that Kṛṣṇa-*prema* is the *prayojana.* Śrī Caitanya-deva is Kṛṣṇacandra Himself, the king of all Vaiṣṇavas in the world, Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja. The gathering of His devotees is the Śrī Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā. The foremost ministers among the members of the society are Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and his honored Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī. Those who consider themselves followers of Śrī Rūpa are the members of this Śrī Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā. The leaders among them are Śrī Śrī Prabhupāda Śrīmad Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī and Śrī Śrī Prabhupāda Jīva Gosvāmī.
>
> During that period of misfortune for the world's inhabitants, after Śrī Gauracandra displayed the pastime of His disappearance, Śrīmad Jīva Prabhu preached *śrī-bhāgavata-dharma* on the command of Śrī Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana. Those who Śrī Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana accepted as disciples became the leaders, and later the directors, of the *sabhā.* Upon becoming the prime director of the *sabhā,* Śrī Jīva Prabhupāda termed the teachings that Śrī Rūpa had propagated in the *sabhā* as the *Bhāgavat-sandarbha,* or *Ṣaṭ-sandarbha*. Knowing this *Ṣaṭ-sandarbha* to be the teachings of Śrī Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana, members of the Śrī Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā thus perform Hari-*bhajana*. The pure and transcendental method of worship given by Śrīmad Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, one of the leaders of the Śrī Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā, by bearing the commands of Śrī Rūpa on his head, is the adorable object for devotees of Śrī Gaura.
>
> By taking shelter at the pure feet of Śrī Rūpa and Śrī Raghunātha, Śrīpāda Kṛṣṇadāsa

Kavirāja Gosvāmī Prabhu, the king of the family of *rasikas,* became one of the directors of the Śrī Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā. And subsequently, Śrī Narottama Ṭhākura Mahodaya, the crest jewel of transcendental devotees, decorated the crown of this Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā in the post of its director. Later, such kings of devotees as Śrī Śrīpāda Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura spread their moonlike rays upon the *sabhā.* The darkness of night cannot always predominate over the three worlds, which are covered by ignorance; therefore we sometimes behold shining stars in the spiritual firmament, which is bathed in the moonlike rays of Śrī Gauracandra.

In 399 Gaura Era (1885 A.D.), a brilliant star of the universal Vaiṣṇava firmament re-illuminated the Śrī Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā. During that period many people in the great city of Calcutta received light from this *sabhā.* As a result of that light, the sight of the cooling rays of Śrī Gauracandra reflected in loving eyes is nowadays visible in this world. Just as autumnal clouds suddenly spread in the sky and cover the moon's rays, so materialistic non-Vaiṣṇavas in the dress of Vaiṣṇavas cause hindrances to that transcendental light in society. It is now four years since the servant of the king of universal Vaiṣṇavas, and leader of Śrī Rūpa's followers, departed from this world, and sometimes his light is covered by mist. Seeing this, those who are sheltered at the feet of the followers of Śrī Rūpa have become firmly resolved to protect the light of discourses on Hari from the strong gale.

The transcendental flower of Kṛṣṇa-*prema* that budded forth from the *ācāryas* headed by Śrī Rūpa, Śrī Raghunātha, and Śrī Jīva was manifest to the world as a blossom by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and after his disappearance it continued to bloom fully. Śrī Rūpa's followers have protected that beautiful and fragrant flower from the attack of depraved people, and thus have aided the olfactory function of the bees swarming at Śrī Gaura's feet. In this connection, we request everyone to read chapter nine of the *Ādi-līlā* of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* composed by the king of *rasika* devotees, about the divine loving activities of the gardener Śrī Caitanya.

The members of the *sabhā* will not accept any service from those determined to oppose it. Gaurasundara, reinforcing their service to Agha, Baka, and Pūtanā within their hearts, will not give them a place in the Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā. We are keenly distressed for such persons and weep for them. Had it been Gaurasundara's intention that only Śrī Rūpa Prabhu should come to this world and that he should not have any followers, or that only the Nāma-haṭṭa of Nityānanda should exist and not the Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā, then He would not have increased the numbers of *rūpānugas.*[2]

Conventions of the Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā were held each year in Māyāpur after Navadvīpa-dhāma Parikramā and chaired by the Tripura kings. The main highlight of these meetings was speeches by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and other sannyasis and leading devotees. Another feature was the conferral of titles upon deserving devotees, along with poetic accolades to them written in Sanskrit by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura or others. These laudations

were presented to the individual devotees in written form as *āśīrvāda-patras* (Sanskrit eulogiums). Special awards were also bestowed at *sabhā* sittings.

After the arising of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, the *sabhā* continued as a collateral organization, consisting mostly of Gauḍīya Maṭha members but also with other devotees and sympathizers, and with Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī as president. The name Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, given in 1920 by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī to the center at Ultadingi Road, was retained upon shifting to Bāg-bazar. Circa 1922 the expanding movement became generally known as the Gauḍīya Maṭha, with each new chapter also being termed a Gauḍīya Maṭha, although official matters continued to be carried out in the name of the *sabhā*. Formal and legal papers, bulletins, addresses, and so on, were issued by the *sabhā,* but in publications and among commited members and the public alike, the organization was commonly referred to as the Gauḍīya Maṭha, a name considerably shorter and easier to remember and say than Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā. At some point, Gauḍīya Mission came to be used as a synonym for the Gauḍīya Maṭha.

Four

Rapid Expansion

The Mission Unfolds

From his base in Calcutta, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura frequently undertook preaching excursions. He concentrated on Bengal and Orissa, where many people were already steeped in Gauḍīya culture and responded enthusiastically. It was a ripe field for enlisting the manpower needed to effectuate a Vaiṣṇava reawakening.[*] As new recruits enrolled, they were trained and then sent out to preach and open more centers. In this way the organization gradually spread throughout India and beyond.

Touring widely, speaking constantly, having his accompanying disciples also lecture and preach, and participating in mass *nagara-saṅkīrtana* parades, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī often spent entire days going from one function to another, regularly discoursing for three to four hours nonstop. Even when not formally orating, he was continually surrounded by curious and often defiant inquirers peppering him with questions. He took it as a sign of the times that everything presented would be challenged in various ways—he called it heckling—and considered it his duty to answer each person individually, which he did with innumerable quotations from *śāstra,* supported by keen logic and philosophical insight. By analytical comparison of different theories of knowledge, he delineated Lord Caitanya's teachings as the ultimate exposition of reality, surpassing all relative truths, speculations, and ideations. He spoke not only with erudition, but with force, from the platform of certitude and realization: All living beings are eternal servants of Kṛṣṇa, the original Personality of Godhead; thus the purpose of life is to surrender to Him. And in this dark Kali-yuga, the means to attain love of Kṛṣṇa is to offenselessly chant the *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

No longer a solitudinarian, but the head of a thriving mission, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was becoming a reputed and sought-after sadhu. His enemies were neither few nor trivial, yet the number of his backers was also significant. Wherever he went, crowds received him with *saṅkīrtana,* garlands, and often encomiums and formal speeches of felicitation. Even people with no previous interest in *bhakti* forgot their anxieties and became engulfed in the atmosphere of transcendental bliss generated by this extraordinary preacher's absorption in Hari-*kathā.* He now regularly met intellectuals, leaders of the British Raj, and Indian kings. Many naturally pious people inclined to *bhakti* but lacking proper guidance hearkened to his call, being captivated by the genuine spiritual substance, absent in conventional Hinduism, being offered by this unique and novel propounder of Vaiṣṇava dharma. Finding their heartfelt hankering fulfilled, they wholeheartedly accepted him as their savior and submitted as his disciples.

Animated by the intrepid, unshakably confident preaching of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, his sannyasis and *brahmacārīs* forayed into distant towns and villages to lecture, perform *nagara-saṅkīrtana,* and go door to door distributing journals and soliciting contributions. Traveling parties were usually headed by one or sometimes two *pracārakas,* often sannyasis, who were required to lecture and reply to the torrents of diverse questions and challenges they inevitably faced. Accompanying would be several *brahmacārīs,* including a *kīrtanīyā,* a skilled *mṛdaṅga*

player, a cook, and one proficient in collecting funds. In pursuance of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's order to "go out preaching on foot, by car, in boats, and even riding camels and elephants," these parties ventured widely, often remaining only briefly in each spot, not just in Bengal and Orissa but also beyond, to bring Caitanya Mahāprabhu's message to places where it had hardly been propagated before and thus was little known. This widespread aggressive grassroots propagation, quite atypical of traditional Hinduism, made Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's mission all the more revolutionary.*

Awed by his nobility, insuperable willpower, and uncommon influence, the famous Chittaranjan Dāsa termed Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī *ācārya-keśarī* (lion guru).1* Sadhus and gurus are expected to be mild and polite, not at all like lions, but Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura personified the lionlike qualities of his worshipable Lord Caitanya:

> *caitanya-siṁhera navadvīpe avatāra*
> *siṁha-grīva, siṁha-vīrya, siṁhera huṅkāra*
>
> The lionlike Lord Caitanya appeared in Navadvīpa. He has the shoulders of a lion, the power of a lion, and the roar of a lion. (Cc 1.3.30)

1919

A few days after reestablishing the Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī went to Māyāpur to oversee preparations for the upcoming first major annual Gaura-*jayantī* festival to be held there on 15 March 1919. Devotees gathered from Bengal, Orissa, and other parts of India and conjointly chanted, danced, honored *mahā-prasāda,* and bathed in both the Gaṅgā and the nectarean flow of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's discourses. Bhakti-śāstrī examinations were also inaugurated, an educational initiative that was gradually expanded in the following years.

On 20 April, accompanied by many devotees, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī visited Rāmajīvanapura, a village about fifty miles northwest of Calcutta, and established a Bhaktivinoda Āsana at the local Gaura-Viṣṇupriyā temple.

For celebrating the *tirobhāva-tithi* of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, beginning on 29 June Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī put on a grand four-day festival at Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja, the first such annual function to be held there.[†] During the observance he installed a deity of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and delivered a speech titled "Service to the Ācārya," in which he elaborated on worshiping the *ācāryas'* deity form. He concurrently observed the fourth annual *viraha-mahotsava* of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's dear servant and associate Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja.

In August, after celebrating Janmāṣṭamī, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī held a three-week ceremony for remembrance of Hari at the Bhaktivinoda Āsana in Calcutta. He lectured daily on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* and *Vedānta-sūtra*. During this period, under the auspices of the Bhaktivinoda Memorial Committee, on 4 September a large meeting was held at the Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣad hall. And on the *āvirbhāva-tithi* of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, another wonderful celebration was held at that Bhaktivinoda Āsana.

In October a severe cyclone destroyed countless lives and properties in East Bengal just before Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was scheduled to visit there. Swollen rivers teemed with the flotsam of wrecked houses and dead bodies of animals and humans, and hardly a boat or other functional conveyance was available. Undaunted, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī went ahead with his tour, and amid devastation and stench repeatedly explained verse 10.14.8 of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam:*

tat te 'nukampāṁ su-samīkṣamāṇo
bhuñjāna evātma-kṛtaṁ vipākam
hṛd-vāg-vapurbhir vidadhan namas te
jīveta yo mukti-pade sa dāya-bhāk

My Lord, one who earnestly waits for You to bestow Your causeless mercy upon him, while patiently suffering the reactions of his past misdeeds and offering You homage with

heart, words, and body, is surely eligible for liberation, for it has become his rightful claim.

1920

Several significant gains for the mission were realized in 1920. At the end of February Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī reintroduced Navadvīpa-dhāma Parikramā. On Janmāṣṭamī he established the Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha at 1 Ultadingi Road and there revealed service to small deities of Śrī Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī and of a tall deity of Śrī Gaurasundara, who soon became renowned for changing the minds of even rigidly atheistic persons who received His *darśana.* Previous to this, Śrī Jagadīśa Bhakti Pradīpa's wife had died, and the other resident *gṛhasthas* at the Ultadingi Road Bhaktivinoda Āsana had relocated their female kin. The function and ambiance of the Āsana now having changed considerably, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī expanded its purpose and renamed it Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, although out of habit the name Bhaktivinoda Āsana was still used for some time. Thereafter, in accordance with traditional standards for a *maṭha,* residence was restricted exclusively to males.

In June, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's mother, Śrīmatī Bhagavatī-devī, who had for some years been residing in Māyāpur, left this earthly plane from Bhakti Bhavan on the sixth *tirobhāva-tithi* of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Shortly before her departure she called Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī to her bedside and expressed her desire that the holy name of Śrīman Mahāprabhu be broadcast throughout the world.

During August, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was obliged to give a statement to local police in response to a certain *bābājī's* charge that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had instigated some dacoits into committing a felony. After various protracted proceedings, in December the matter came before the Krishnanagar sessions court, wherein the defense attorney's cross-examination revealed that *bābājī* to be in cahoots with Priyanātha Nandī, the old adversary of the Gauḍīya Maṭha. Hence the lettered class of Nadia came to know how those two supposedly religious persons, being motivated by sheer hatred of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, had conspired to tar his name and have him imprisoned.

Also during 1920, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī directed the excavation of two ponds in Māyāpur: one, designated as Gaura-kuṇḍa, at the Yogapīṭha; the other, which he declared nondifferent from the primordial Rādhā-kuṇḍa in Vraja-*maṇḍala,* at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha.

Vaiṣṇava-mañjuṣā

On 26 September 1920, Maharaja Maṇīndra-candra Nandī visited the Gauḍīya Maṭha. Still remorseful that eight years previously Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had remained fasting in his palace for four days, the maharaja entreated him to return and this time be served properly. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura then informed him of the need for a Vaiṣṇava encyclopedia. Acknowledging that such a compendium was required and that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was the only one capable of compiling it, the maharaja volunteered to fund the project. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura suggested that they discuss the matter in detail upon his going to Kashimbazar.

The next day, accompanied by a small group of leading disciples, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura visited the maharaja's Calcutta mansion. The maharaja seated him on a sofa, then sat at his feet and presented his own proposal: "The original *manoharsāhī* style of *kīrtana* is all but lost. There are no more traditional itinerant preachers of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma. Let Jagadīśa Bhakti Pradīpa go and preach, and two others go to Vṛndāvana to study Śrīnivāsa Ācārya's *kīrtana* method, with the intention of reviving it. I am ready to bear their expenses." In reply, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura elaborately explained the difference between hired speakers and singers and those of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, emphasizing that no one can be paid to be a devotee. Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu then animatedly told Maharaja Nandī that the putative devotees whom he was maintaining, although perhaps adept in bookish knowledge, were not actually his well-wishers. Vāsudeva Prabhu also expressed his own good fortune in having obtained the shelter of a bona fide guru. The maharaja admitted that everything Vāsudeva Prabhu had spoken was true.

Maharaja Nandī was inclined to help Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his mission, yet fearful of retribution from the caste Goswamis who had him in their manacles. Well aware of this, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura fulfilled the maharaja's wish, and on 20 October journeyed to Kashimbazar, where he requested a donation of three lakh rupees, the estimated requirement to research, compile, and publish the anthology, to be called *Vaiṣṇava-mañjuṣā*.* When Maharaja Nandī expressed inability to offer so much all at once, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura asked him to give whatever he could. The maharaja then offered three hundred rupees per month, but the following day cut it to two hundred on the plea that he was already issuing a monthly stipend to a *paṇḍita*. He next proposed to assist the funding by purchasing Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's house on the beach in Purī for ten thousand rupees, which Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura agreed to. As per his pledge, Maharaja Nandī submitted a total of fourteen hundred rupees over seven months, but then ceased giving. A disappointed Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura understood that his enemies had influenced the maharaja, and while lamenting the fickle-mindedness of worldly persons, desisted from pursuing the matter. Yet subsequently he often praised Maharaja Nandī's open-heartedness and generosity. The maharaja continued to attend Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's lectures whenever possible, and was present when Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura conducted Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *tirobhāva-mahatsova* in Purī in 1925.

For several months after this visit to Kashimbazar, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura concentrated on

compiling *Vaiṣṇava-mañjuṣā,* based on his fifteen-plus years of research conducted throughout India. It was to contain explanations of obscure words found in Vaiṣṇava texts, brief biographies of prominent devotees, overviews of important devotional writings, genealogical tables of celebrated Vaiṣṇava lineages, descriptions of Vaiṣṇava holy places, the history and teachings of different Vaiṣṇava sects, inventories of books and manuscripts stored in major libraries, descriptions of rituals and temple architecture, and more. Yet the most important feature was to give proper meaning to misused or conventionally misunderstood words. A team of devotees was assembled to help with further research and production, culminating in the publication between 1922 and 1925 of four volumes of incompletely sorted and undeveloped materials as *Vaiṣṇava-mañjuṣā-samāhṛti.*[*] A fifth volume was partially compiled, but under pressure from the caste Goswamis, Maharaja Nandī's monthly donations for this purpose were eventually discontinued, and the torso remained incomplete at the time of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's passing away.[†]

Having taken up work on *Vaiṣṇava-mañjuṣā,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī continued to focus on writing, thus producing diverse publications in forthcoming years. Gradually gaining assistance in literary work from some outstanding intellectual recruits, from August 1922 he was able to float the weekly *Gauḍīya* magazine.

Pioneering in East Bengal

In November 1920 Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī inducted his first sannyasi, Śrīmad Bhakti Pradīpa Tīrtha Mahārāja, and on the next day sent him with three colleagues to preach in Dacca, the main city in East Bengal.

Whereas the majority of Hindus in West Bengal were worshipers of Durgā and Kālī, traditionally those of East Bengal were predominantly devotees of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Even more than their brethren in West Bengal, East Bengalis tended to be vivacious, emotional, and lovers of song and dance, and hence natural candidates for Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *saṅkīrtana* movement. Besides, the geographical isolation of East Bengal had largely insulated its populace from the overt skepticism that had precipitated a Hindu existential crisis elsewhere, especially in West Bengal. Thus East Bengal was a prime theater for the Gauḍīya Maṭha and would yield a high percentage of its initiated members, including most of its leaders.

However, initially the greatest obstacle in communicating *śuddha-bhakti* to East Bengali Hindus was that their natural faithfulness was misplaced, nearly all having been initiated by and in the coils of bogus gurus and *prākṛta-sahajiyās.* Fish-eating "Vaiṣṇavas," artificial shows of ecstasy, scriptural recitations in exchange for lucre, guruship conducted as a business, and myriad other contaminations had smothered the real spirit of Lord Caitanya's teachings. To contradistinguish themselves from all this rascaldom and relieve others from it, Śrīmat Tīrtha Mahārāja's party declaimed those perversions.

East Bengal had already been exposed to this "new" style of Vaiṣṇava dharma when Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī toured there two years before. Now that his emissaries had returned with an apparent resolve to stay, the professional "gurus" responded swiftly. They ordered their followers—virtually the entire town—to boycott the discourses of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's disciples and not give them money, food, or even water, warning that doing so would offend their gurus and forefathers and invite untold troubles upon their children. Difficult as it was for people to deny sadhus, they withal feared disobeying their theoretical gurus. By this subterfuge, the false gurus planned to drive the preachers away and continue their cheating business without interruption. Considering the devotees to be an incipient threat to their hold on the public, and having no reasonable defense, those misologists would not even discuss with the Gauḍīya Maṭha delegates.

When one morning the gentleman hosting the Gauḍīya Maṭha men curtly told them to leave by afternoon, Tīrtha Mahārāja dispatched a telegram to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to apprise him of the crisis and soon got the telegraphic reply: "If necessary, survive by drinking the water of the Buriganga, but do not stop distributing the teachings of Lord Caitanya."[*] Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura quickly penned and printed a tract titled "A Submission to the Residents of Dacca," which greatly helped the cause of his embattled representatives. Gradually the Gauḍīya Maṭha voice was heard, and some educated young men of East Bengal came forward to join.

In mid-1921, a much publicized controversy helped the Gauḍīya Maṭha gain a solid foothold in East Bengal. Atula-candra Cakravartī, a resident of Dacca, who initially had strongly opposed the Gauḍīya Maṭha preachers, changed his opinion after listening to their discourses and observing their pure habits and dedication. But like many others who respected them as sadhus, he still had reservations: Why did they excoriate caste Goswamis and others who for generations had been spiritual mentors and also worshiped Kṛṣṇa, chanted His names, wore *tilaka,* and quoted the same scriptures? To settle these doubts, Atula Babu sent a list of thirty questions to both a well-known *jāta-gosāñi* of Navadvīpa and to Śrīmat Tīrtha Mahārāja. Upon receiving answers, he forwarded them for critique to Dr. Dhīrendranātha Bandhopādhyāya, a member of the Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā.

The questions, answers, and Dr. Bandhopādhyāya's analysis were compiled as a book called *Ācāra o Ācārya*. Its publication was a major step toward convincing educated Bengalis that the Gauḍīya Maṭha was bona fide, yet it provoked an outcry from the "religious businessmen" whom it exposed. The queries pointed at the improper behavior and claims of the caste Goswamis: What are the scriptural definitions of guru and Goswami? How are the guru lineages from Śrī Nityānanda and Advaita Prabhu to be understood? Is it acceptable for initiated Vaiṣṇavas to take non-vegetarian food and intoxicants? Is it proper to be remunerated for *kīrtana* performances and scriptural recitations? Do those who distinguish Vaiṣṇavas according to their former caste go to hell? What is the qualification to be a guru?

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī next visited Dacca in October 1921, with the express purpose of instituting a new Maṭha there. Going out daily for *saṅkīrtana* in several neighborhoods of the city, he and his followers happened upon a suitable roomy house at 90 Nawabpur Road, a prominent thoroughfare. Inquiry from local people revealed that the building was haunted by a minacious ghost and hence otherwise vacant. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī immediately decided to occupy it. He had never feared ghosts, having witnessed from his early life the power of pure chanting of the holy names in dispelling all macabre elements. He soon arranged to rent the property, whereat he inaugurated the Mādhva Gauḍīya Maṭha during Govardhana-*pūjā* (13 October). When on 31 October he there installed deities of Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga, a major festival was organized, with profuse distribution of *mahā-prasāda* and a huge *saṅkīrtana* procession in the city.

Remaining in Dacca during Kārtika, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura gave daily evening lectures at a Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple, explaining the first verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in thirty unprecedented ways. Throughout the month Tīrtha Mahārāja and other learned disciples of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura also discoursed daily at various places in Dacca city. As Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu had dispatched Nityānanda Prabhu and Haridāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura also deployed his men door to door to beg alms and speak the message of Kṛṣṇa at every threshold. In the same city where, less than a year before, Gauḍīya Maṭha devotees had repeatedly seen doors slammed in their faces, now everywhere the talk was that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had rediscovered Dacca as a latent second Vṛndāvana. Becoming overwhelmed in an ambrosial flood of Hari-*saṅkīrtana* and Hari-*kathā,* many persons approached Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to

seek shelter as disciples at his lotus feet. Although the struggle against placebo gurus was far from over, the Gauḍīya Maṭha had clearly made significant gains.

1921–23

During the first six weeks of 1921 Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was bedridden with a severe carbuncle. Nonetheless, he went on discoursing enthusiastically to disciples and visitors. And as soon as the condition slightly abated he set out for East Bengal. After traveling all day by train and steamer he rested overnight, and was then carried by palanquin to a village for a program of *kīrtana* and lectures. Oblivious to bodily strain, he descanted to the numerous distinguished visitors who came to see him. After three days in the village, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī proceeded to Dacca for four more days of intense preaching to members of the learned elite there. Then he returned to Krishnanagar and Māyāpur to oversee arrangements for the upcoming Navadvīpa-dhāma Parikramā and Gaura-*jayantī* celebrations.

Notwithstanding his debilitated health, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's addiction to glorifying Hari could not be allayed, and he participated with gusto in the festivities. But afterward he became afflicted by an old hernia condition complicated by seven consecutive bouts of colic pain, and it seemed that at any moment he might pass away. Late in March 1921, he finally acceded to disciples' requests that he take a break for recuperation. On the advice of the foremost Ayurvedic physician in Calcutta, he went with only a few retainers to rest in Bhubaneswar, the water of whose Bindu-sarovara is famed for its therapeutic effects. Yet the colic pain continued to increase, so in May 1921 he shifted to Purī, where the salubrious littoral climate conduced his eventual regaining of full fitness. On this visit to Orissa he resolved to establish Gauḍīya Maṭha branches at Bhubaneswar, Purī, and Ālālanātha, which he gradually accomplished in the following years, beginning with founding the Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha at Bhakti-kuṭī in Purī on 9 June 1922 by installing a deity of Mahāprabhu. At this new Maṭha he also inaugurated an annual memorial festival in honor of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Gadādhara Paṇḍita.

The annual festival of the Calcutta Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha in 1922 began on 23 September with Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī leading a grand *saṅkīrtana* cavalcade through the city streets. After a long and hectic day, while the devotees were fast asleep that night, a cry arose as all awoke amid huge flames. Their first concern was for Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's safety. Yet he told them not to worry for him, but to ensure that the deities and his library were protected. Miraculously, everything was saved, no one was injured, all the foodstuff that had been collected for the festival remained intact, and no significant damage was incurred. That it was a case of arson was obvious from the charred bunches of hay strewn around. And even though the blaze soon dissipated, it was purely by Kṛṣṇa's grace that the fire had not spread.

The most significant events of 1923 were inaugurating the construction of the new temple of the Śrī Caitanya Maṭha in March, and establishing the Gaudiya Printing Works in Calcutta in August.[*]

1924–25

With the fiftieth anniversary of their savior's appearance approaching, leading members of the Gauḍīya Maṭha met to plan a fitting celebration to instruct human society how an *ācārya* should be worshiped. Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu proposed the title Golden Jubilee to parallel observances held for secular kings, but Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī preferred the *śāstrīya* and siddhāntic name: Vyāsa-*pūjā*. Accordingly, on 24 February 1924 at Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, the first annual Vyāsa-*pūjā* of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was conducted, taking a clue from the *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* description of Nityānanda Prabhu's worship of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and also from the ancient manuscript *Saṅkṣepa-vyāsa-pūjā-paddhati* (The concise system of performing Vyāsa-*pūjā*), which Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had found in the Govardhana Maṭha library in Purī and personally duplicated. Sundarānanda Prabhu had recently come across that copy and shown it to Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu.[2] During the ceremony, Vāsudeva Prabhu recited for the first time *praṇāma-mantras* honoring Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī by succinctly defining his transcendental glories.[*] On Vāsudeva Prabhu's request Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī accepted the title Śrīla Prabhupāda. Often rendered simply as Prabhupāda, this appellation was soon adopted as the standard mode for his disciples to address him. Subsequent Vyāsa-*pūjās* were observed at different branches of the Gauḍīya Maṭha and were memorable gatherings, attended not only by disciples but by many appreciative dignitaries of the broader public as well.

In December 1924, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura spoke to the Bengali Association at Banaras Hindu University about the position of Vaiṣṇava philosophy in the religious world.[3] Although Banaras had long been a seat of learning, particularly of Māyāvāda, the president of that meeting, Śrī M.M. Pramathanātha Tarkabhūṣaṇa, openly admitted that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's discourse was too deep for his audience to comprehend.[4] Although Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's diction was known to be recondite, during his sojourn in Banaras it became so exceedingly abstruse as to be nigh unintelligible even to the numerous resident accomplished scholars. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura spent a few days there searching for places of Lord Caitanya's pastimes. He then continued with his companions to the various holy sites in and around Ayodhyā, Naimiṣāraṇya, Prayāga, and Āḍāila, a village on the other side of the Yamunā from Prayāga that Caitanya Mahāprabhu had visited.[5] Then the party returned to Banaras and stayed nearly a month, bundling themselves up against weather colder than most Bengalis had ever experienced.

Starting on 29 January 1925 and continuing for almost a month, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī took approximately one hundred devotees on a tour of Gauḍa-*maṇḍala,* the places in West Bengal where Lord Caitanya and His associates had performed Their pastimes. Travel was mostly by train, but often by boat, sometimes in the back of lorries, once on horses and elephants, and many miles on foot. During this expedition Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's continuous Hari-*kathā* focused on the glories of Lord Caitanya and His associates, the pastimes performed at the *śrīpāṭas* visited, and the lessons to be learned from them.

A Murderous Attack

Gauḍa-maṇḍala Parikramā was followed by the fifth annual Navadvīpa-dhāma Parikramā, during which the smoldering opposition of the caste Goswamis came to a head. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had fearlessly and consistently contested the nefarious practices of false devotees, such as levying temple entrance fees, performing *kīrtana* and reciting *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* for monetary gain, and becoming "gurus" by profession. Furthermore, his propagating that Māyāpur was the actual site of Lord Caitanya's *āvirbhāva* was increasingly harming the business of the temple proprietors of Navadvīpa. The previous year, by organizing a quasi-religious meeting adjacent to the Parikramā during its stopover in Kuliyā, local caste Goswamis had ineffectually attempted to divert attention away from the Parikramā. Thereafter tension between the two parties remained high, and conflict seemed inevitable.

In defiance of the wobbly hegemony of the professed Goswamis, on 4 March 1925 Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī again marched into their stronghold, Kuliyā, along with six to seven hundred followers, including many women, accompanying the small Śrī Rādhā-Govinda deities riding on an elephant. After resting at midday in a *dharmaśālā,* in the evening the party reassembled at the spot where Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was to lecture. Shortly after the pilgrims arrived, some rowdies showered dust, dirt, gravel, cow dung, and garbage on them and raucously demanded that they stop *kīrtana.* A local caste Goswami entered among the group and tried to incite a quarrel, but the Parikramā participants sagaciously remained calm, and to avoid an affray, unobtrusively dispersed into the dusk. They briskly returned to the *dharmaśālā,* being jibed at and threatened as they went.

Considering that the Parikramā would not be complete without hearing about the pastimes Mahāprabhu had enacted in that locale, the next morning one hundred to two hundred pilgrims, mostly males, returned to the place where they had been intimidated the previous evening. While Śrīmat Tīrtha Mahārāja was lecturing, a gang of ruffians suddenly appeared and pelted brickbats at the elephant's trunk. Parikramā attendees admonished the aggressors to desist from the offensive act of harassing the deities' mount, and to their surprise the rogues departed. But minutes later they returned wielding large sticks, which they had kept ready in proximate shops. The defenseless pilgrims quickly brought the deities of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda down into their midst, thinking that surely these felons would not continue their atrocities in the direct presence of the Lord. Then a well-known rich man of Navadvīpa drove up in a car and barked out an order, upon which ruthless blackguards lurking nearby, some perched on rooftops, let forth a volley of brickbats.

The mahout quickly manouvered the elephant away from trouble, but escape was not so easy for the pilgrims. Some found shelter in homesteads, yet most doors remained shut. The few brave householders who dared offer refuge had their doors kicked and beaten on. Some devotees fled down adjacent alleys. Those who beseeched local coachmen to transport them were scornfully refused, and became further aghast to behold the horsecarts loaded with stones as ammunition.

The few devotees who tried to fight back were outnumbered and beleaguered. Bhakti Sāraṅga Prabhu was captured yet remained undaunted, asserting himself boldly, even though threatened to be offered as a human sacrifice on the spot. A few devotees suffered severe gashes and fractures, a youth was knocked unconscious, *mṛdaṅgas* and banners were broken, and Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu was robbed of six hundred rupees and his winter clothing. But although Navadvīpa's streets became stained by the blood of Vaiṣṇavas, by Lord Nṛsiṁha-deva's grace none were killed.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had escaped due to the adroitness of Vinoda Bihārī Brahmacārī, who had entreated a reluctant house-owner to give them entry. Therein Vinoda Bihārī, being similar in size and appearance to his *gurudeva,* swapped his white clothing with the red of his guru-*mahārāja.* With great risk he then escorted Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura back to Māyāpur.

As was later revealed by sympathetic local residents, the dastardly attack had been planned by certain caste Goswamis, who most grossly offended both the deities and an acclaimed *ācārya* by unconscionably hiring criminals to perpetrate violence on pilgrims engaged in peacefully chanting *harināma* in a holy place—who should have been received as guests in the sacred *dhāma*. This was their rejoinder to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's exposure of their cheating in the name of Lord Caitanya. Having no power to counteract his message, they had stooped to the lowest level in trying to stop him. But stop him they could not. The shocked public sided with the Gauḍīya Maṭha, and the pilgrimage continued under police protection. The flagitious tactics of the *jāta-gosāñis* had backfired, for this incident ineradicably tarnished their reputation and influence. Overnight, the caste Goswamis' opposition to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī lost whatever apparent credibility it previously had.

As news of the assault spread throughout Bengal, learned circles protested in magazines and newspapers. Four days later *Ananda Bazar Patrika* quoted an eyewitness: "I witnessed the reenactment of what Jagāi and Mādhāi did to Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu over four hundred years ago." Subsequently, the chief police inspector of Navadvīpa was cashiered, and the next year the *parikramā* party was protected by an escort of thirty-six policemen.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura mentioned the episode in his commentary on *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata:*

> A few days ago in Kuliyā-nagara, some persons with the help of a few fierce miscreants, rather than offering respect, unfairly attacked innocent Vaiṣṇava sannyasis, *brāhmaṇas,* and devotee women, all of whom had come to participate in circumambulating the *dhāma.* All these are simply unfavorable activities against the teachings of Śrī Caitanya-deva.[6]

However, when urged to make a case against the hooligans, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura declined, opining that they had done yeoman service—otherwise, how could the Gauḍīya Maṭha have been featured on the front pages of all the newspapers?

1926–30

In June 1926 Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura founded the Śrī Sanātana Gauḍīya Maṭha at Banaras.* A local newspaper reported:

> To the great fortune of Banaras, the Maṭha has newly been established. Casting aside the rind of fruitive acts and the seed of dry wisdom, the luminaries of the Maṭha are approaching every denizen of the city with the ambrosial substance of the Veda *śāstras.* There is no denying the fact that the disinterested endeavor of the devotees will ere long draw out the fallen from dusty oblivion. We are happy to see the mission gaining sympathy daily from all quarters.[7]

Another of the several new centers opened that year was in Cuttack—the Saccidānanda Maṭha, named after Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda, who for some time had been posted in Cuttack as a schoolteacher. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura stated that at the Saccidānanda Maṭha there should be service to the *saccidānanda* deity, and that it should be a Theism Research Institute. On 22 July 1926 the *Utkala Mirror* announced:

> It will be a matter of great delight for the people of Orissa to know that a new Vaiṣṇava *maṭha,* as a branch of the Śrī Caitanya Maṭha at Navadvīpa, has recently been started at Cuttack. The well-known Gauḍīya Maṭha of Calcutta and the Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha at Purī are two branches. The Sabhā commands service to many highly educated Vaiṣṇavas who are solely devoted to the task of preaching the true Vaiṣṇava religion.[8]

Śrī Rādhā-mohana Pattnaik, sub-deputy collector, commented:

> The cult of pure Vaiṣṇavism, with its intense spiritualism as preached by Lord Caitanya, was almost declining on account of the degeneration and selfishness of its latter-day followers. Many evils and corrupt practices crept into it, so much so that people were beginning to abhor the very name of a Vaiṣṇava. Thanks are due to the Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā, which has earnestly and vigorously taken up the work of reconstruction and revival, with a view to putting an end to all grotesque and monstrous forms of perverted religion introduced by selfish and degenerate pseudo-Vaiṣṇavas. Already its labors have begun to bear fruit, and it is expected that in the near future the mission will command worldwide success. The distinguished and devoted band of highly cultured sannyasi preachers, who have sacrificed all that is material at the altar of love and devotion, are doing excellent work in the field. The visit of Swami Giri to this historic town has been hailed with delight by all sincere seekers after truth, and his presence and activities have created a stir in the pseudo-Vaiṣṇava world.* Since his stay at the Saccidānanda Maṭha at Cuttack, he has been trying his best to secure the sympathy and cooperation of all communities, irrespective of caste and creed, to make this Maṭha a permanent religious institution in the capital of Orissa, for the propagation of the true Vaiṣṇava religion and for dissemination of healthy Vaiṣṇava literature published under the auspices of the Viśva-

Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā.

Gradually, by the influence of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's inspired preaching, several wealthy men came forward to donate for temple construction, some of them also becoming his disciples. Śrī Sakhī Caraṇa Rāya contributed the entire cost of the *mandira* at the birthsite of Lord Caitanya in Māyāpur. Similarly, Śrī Madana-mohana dāsa Adhikārī bore the expenses for the principal temple of the Śrī Caitanya Maṭha at Māyāpur. Spiritual discourses were regularly conducted in the adjoining Avidyā-haraṇa Sārasvata Nāṭya-mandira, or Avidyā-haraṇa Śravaṇa-sadana, named both for the devotee who had donated for its construction, and for its function of removing ignorance (*avidyā-haraṇa*).[*] The temple and most of the accompanying buildings of the Maṭha in Madras were funded by the Maharaja of Jeypore (Orissa), Dr. Vikram Varma, D.Lit.; its assembly hall was built by Sir Ponirula Pillai, a contractor of Madras.[†]

In September 1928, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī laid the foundation for a major new temple on just over three acres adjoining the Gaṅgā in Bāg-bazar, Calcutta. The complex was envisioned to be a far more opulent and sizable structure than the previous, with all facilities and accouterments suitable for a dynamic and prominent religious movement. The location was of great spiritual significance, as evidenced by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's repeatedly stating during a visit to the building site, "Mahāprabhu must have blessed this place with the touch of His divine feet. There is no doubt about it. On the way from Varāhanagara, Mahāprabhu definitely stopped here on the bank of the Gaṅgā and performed *saṅkīrtana* with His associates."[9] Speaking thus, he became overwhelmed by transcendental emotion. Śrī Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī conjectured, "That is probably why this land remained vacant for so long; otherwise, there being so many available plots in Calcutta, how has this one become the site for the new Maṭha?"[‡]

Śrī Jagabandhu Bhakti Rañjana Prabhu, the sole donor, took charge of construction and pushed hard to quickly realize the project. But after two years of intense effort and a few postponed openings it remained unfinished, mostly because Jagabandhu Prabhu refused to compromise on quality and his ever adding some new ornate decoration.[§] Finally it was decided to occupy the buildings in their incomplete condition. On 12 October 1930 the *Liberty* reported:

> On Sunday the 5th October last, the streets of North Calcutta were scenes of a record procession on the occasion of the new Gauḍīya Maṭha constructed in Bāg-bazar. Devotees from different provinces of India, viz., Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Orissa, Madras, United Provinces, and the Punjab, had been pouring into Calcutta for days before the ceremony. Since Sunday morning sympathizers and disciples began to gather at the premises of the old Gauḍīya Maṭha and toward noon its surroundings extending up to Circular Road and Maniktolla Junction presented the view of a vast sea of heads. Hundreds of *saṅkīrtana* parties from different quarters of Calcutta and suburbs, varieties of concert and band parties joined the procession.
>
> The *śrī-vigrahas* of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, Śrī Gaura–Vinoda-Ānanda Jī, preceded and

followed by congregational chant of the holy name, mounted on a most sumptuously decorated car (*ratha*), were on the move at 2.30 p.m., amidst deafening shouts of *harināma* by the vast multitude in unison with the devotees of the Maṭha. Conchshells were blown; various kinds of music began to play. Veda-mantras and selected Sanskrit hymns were being chanted and the concerted sound of *saṅkīrtana* seemed to rend the skies as the car rolled on at the instance of Paramahaṁsa Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, the *ācārya* of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, preceded and followed by innumerable devotees with flags, festoons, silver rods, and silver spears. The procession was about two miles long, the whole city seemed to be in a tremor, and it was a sight for the gods to see.

The car was a piece of true artistic beauty in perfect keeping with the solemn occasion. In charming costumes the soul-enrapturing beauty of the *śrī-vigrahas* on the car was the cynosure of all eyes. Millions of eager visitors thronged the footpaths, corridors, and roofs throughout the route of the procession. Calcutta had not witnessed such a gigantic religious procession within the memory of its oldest citizens. The procession, which consisted of no less than 43 distinct sections, was formed inside the line by about 25,000 persons on a rough estimate.[10]

All classes of people joined the parade, including several dignitaries of the secular world. The windows and verandas overlooking the two-mile route (which took nearly four hours to traverse) were packed with ladies taking *darśana* from above the crowd. The *Gauḍīya* described the event:

Today the city of Calcutta has become stunned. Everyone left his daily work meant for maintaining his belly. When the tumultuous sound of *kīrtana* was heard on the streets of Calcutta, all the people were attracted, left whatever they were doing, and came dashing into the street. The devotees accompanying the chariot were singing a pean [composed by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura especially for the occasion]:

mātala harijana viṣaya-raṅge
pūjala rāga-patha gaurava bhaṅge

bhramalo cchāḍi' bhoga—cinmaya baṅge
dhāolo pathi pathi bhakata-saṅge

chhāḍalo para-ghara arcite gaṅge
bujhalo rasa-nīte nācato ḍhaṅge

Although apparently absorbed in material affairs, Hari's own people were actually worshiping on the spontaneous path and thus broke the mood of reverential worship.[*]

Having rejected mundane enjoyment, they wandered in spiritual Bengal, running on the roads with other devotees.

> Giving up another's house and worshiping the Gaṅgā, they danced gracefully with understanding of the workings of *rasa*.[11] †

The parade attracted so much attention that a local cinema replayed film coverage of it for nine consecutive days. And crowd pressure on opening day bent a solid iron banister at the Maṭha.

The Gauḍīya Maṭha had begun as a small group of idealists with practically no money or assets. But after the inauguration of this grand temple, the mission became fantastically prosperous. Bounteous funds were received, wonderful festivals held, and many new devotees recruited.

Dr. Dineśa-candra Sena, D.Lit., professor of Bengali literature at the University of Calcutta and a distinguished writer, summarized popular appreciation of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī:*

> What you have achieved is imperishable. What you have done we could never have even conceived. Everything of ours is going toward degradation. Only you have protected everyone by performing this noble task. What you will do in the future will inspire everyone, not just Bengal or India.[12]

In November 1928, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura visited Kurukṣetra at the time of a solar eclipse. There he simultaneously cultured the mood of the *gopīs* when they visited Kurukṣetra to meet Kṛṣṇa, spoke the message of Lord Caitanya to throngs of pilgrims, and on the bank of the sacred Brahma-kuṇḍa inaugurated a Theistic Exhibition along with the new Vyāsa Gauḍīya Maṭha. On 25 November 1928 the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* reported:

> The annual celebrations of Śrī Vyāsa Gauḍīya Maṭha—a Punjab branch at Kurukṣetra of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha of Śrī Māyāpur—lasting for two weeks, have been conducted with signal success. Every one of the ten lakh pilgrims was delighted to have *darśana* of His Divine Grace Paramahaṁsa Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja and to witness the most picturesque demonstration of the real meaning and spiritual significance underlying the bathing ceremony here, by means of installing very beautiful deities. The devotees of the *maṭha* clearly explained everything to the audience in Hindi, Urdu, and English. Many princes, chiefs, rajas, zamindars, merchants, sadhus, high government officials both Indian and European, and other respected persons in large numbers gladly listened every day, both morning and evening, to the Paramahaṁsa Mahārāja explaining the superiority and highest rationality of the religion of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.[13]

After the throngs had dissipated, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura toured the numerous holy sites in the area, beginning with a visit in Thāneśvara to the home of a reputed medieval saint named Jagannātha. There Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura commented that Caitanya Mahāprabhu had visited Kurukṣetra during the solar eclipse in August 1514 and in that very house had instructed Jagannātha on devotion in the mood of separation.* He revealed that the deity of Kālī in the ancient temple at Thāneśvara was she who had killed the dacoits attempting to sacrifice Jaḍa Bharata.[14]

While in that region, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī also visited Śukatala, the sacred place where Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī had recited *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to Mahārāja Parīkṣit and many attendant sages five thousand years before. Later he expressed a desire that an ideal training center in *Bhāgavatam* teachings be established there.[15]

1930–33

Like great *ācāryas* before him, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura expanded his activities through his disciples, who preached in several places that he never or only occasionally visited.

It seemed unlikely that a religious sect from Bengal could expect much success in Assam. The Assamese had traditionally maintained a strong provincial spirit, being determined to preserve an ethnic identity distinct from their inveterate rivals in neighboring Bengal and Manipur. They were particularly leery of Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement, brought to Manipur by Bengali preachers some three hundred years before and adopted as the state religion, superseding previous customs. The Assamese had their own brand of Vaiṣṇavism, more impersonal than devotional, whose theology and rituals were quite dissimilar to those of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma, and they were not inclined to easily relinquish it. Nevertheless, mostly by the vigorous and tenacious efforts of Śrīpāda Nimānanda Sevā Tīrtha, an Assamese disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, initial opposition to the Gauḍīya Maṭha in Assam gradually slackened and transformed into widespread acceptance. Hundreds of Assamese submitted themselves as disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, who on his second trip there became so impressed upon observing the throngs of villagers bringing bags of rice and other donations and expressing natural enthusiasm for *bhakti,* that he promised to thenceforth visit once a year (although ultimately he did not again visit Assam).

In January 1930 Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī attended Kumbha-melā at Prayāga. He preached amid the lakhs of pilgrims and sent his disciples into the throngs to do likewise. While in Prayāga he also installed large deities of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa at Śrī Rūpa Gauḍīya Maṭha, at that time still in a rented property.

During this period Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura went to South India three times—on a whirlwind tour starting late in December 1930, in January 1932 to Madras for installing deities and to accept Vyāsa-*pūjā,* and a more prolonged visit in the summer of 1932.*

In November 1931, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had Śrīmad Bon Mahārāja convey a spiritual message to Lord Willingdon, the viceroy of India. In October 1932 he conducted the Vraja-maṇḍala Parikramā with throngs of disciples and other pilgrims, and then journeyed to Haridwar to lay the foundation for the Śrī Sārasvata Gauḍīya Maṭha.

On 30 October 1931, at a site overlooking the hallowed Triveṇī, the confluence of the three holy rivers Gaṅgā, Yamunā, and the unmanifest Sarasvatī, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī laid the foundation stone for the new temple of the Śrī Rūpa Gauḍīya Maṭha. And on 21 November 1932, the foundation stone for the lecture hall of Śrī Rūpa Gauḍīya Maṭha was laid by Sir William Malcolm Hailey, governor of the United Provinces, who completed his address thus:

> Let me conclude by wishing it success in an effort that, because it is nonsectarian and nonpolitical and teaches a high ideal of universal goodwill, cannot but secure the

sympathy of all who would see greater peace and harmony in a troubled world.[16]

On 24 November, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī consecrated deities of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda at the Śrī Sanātana Gauḍīya Maṭha in Banaras, then proceeded to Calcutta and Māyāpur. In December he went to Dacca, where he inaugurated a Theistic Exhibition and lectured daily to the learned elite there.

In a lecture given in 1933, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura commented on his propaganda activities:

> I saw in Madras and U.P. that when royalty came to see me, there were also security personnel there to protect and attend them. There were always ten or twenty men dressed in red protecting us also. But we are without wealth or possessions. These men feed and clothe me and take care of my health. Thus, though my physical condition is very poor, I run all over, from the ocean to Himācala. Preaching everywhere Śrī Caitanya's message, *śuddha-bhakti-siddhānta-vāṇī,* has become the main work of my life. Many feel that this task is very difficult, whether considered individually or collectively. Hence they should be able to forgive me.[17]

Five

Troubling Undercurrents

Foppery and Sloth

As the Gauḍīya Maṭha continued to grow it attracted more money and prestige—yet with these came problems. Up until around 1930, when the marble temple in Bāg-bazar was opened, most devotees who joined the mission were serious about spiritual life, and the mood was buoyant and lively. But while preaching, temple construction, and other devotional activities continued unabated, lethargy, backbiting, and other prejudicial propensities gradually infiltrated.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura saw seeds of worldly attachment taking root in the very institution he had founded for expelling iniquity from the world. Many *maṭha-vāsīs* became increasingly idle, their days largely consumed by cooking, eating, washing the pots, then resting; then again rising, cooking, eating, washing the pots, and so on.[*] Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would lament, "Our ashram is a joint mess, a place simply for eating and sleeping." He would quote Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, *bhālo manda khāi heri pari cintā-hīna/ nāhi bhāvi e deho chāḍibo kona dina:* "Sometimes I eat nicely, sometimes not. I see this and that, dress as I like, and have no worries at all. I'm so carefree that I never consider that one day I will have to give up this body."[1] He warned that to collect funds and convert them into stool and urine and to live like monkeys is not the business of the Gauḍīya Maṭha.[2†]

It appeared that certain of his leading disciples were becoming ever more motivated by desires for popularity, honor, plaudits, and position. But Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura deemed this inevitable, because for propagating *śuddha-bhakti* the institution was collecting money from materialists, along with which came poison to be ingested. When at Bāg-bazar a visitor observed, "It seems as if some of your preachers are losing their edge," Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura replied, "I established this *maṭha* for Hari-*bhajana.* What happens to those who do not perform *bhajana* is now manifesting."[3] As early as 1927, he penned an appeal for unity:

> Surrounded by enemies, we are serving the Lord and His devotees with great determination. Each of us, more or less, becomes forgetful of service to Kṛṣṇa, being servants of our six enemies.[*] My plea to all of you is to unite and serve the Lord in a spirit of friendship and cooperation, each having the same goal in your hearts. *Ekākī āmāra nāhi pāya bala:* "Alone I obtain no strength."[4] Remember this and perform *kīrtana-yajña* in unison. The indispensable good quality expected of those in charge of *kīrtana-yajña* is to have friendship with all Vaiṣṇavas and execute devotional service by pleasing all Vaiṣṇavas.[5]

Despite bewailing the plight of the organization he had founded, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī never commented disparagingly about it, for he did not accept that the quintessential Gauḍīya Maṭha could be polluted by the misbehavior of any delinquent members. He delineated the difference between genuine disciples and motivated followers, between the real, transcendental Gauḍīya Maṭha and its outer semblance:

> Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha does not and cannot have anything in common with those who

duplicitously join it with a motive to misuse divine knowledge to serve their own selfish ends. Feigned *dīkṣā* and obtainment of divine knowledge are never identical. Śrī Caitanya and His sincere devotees are eternally present in Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha. Owlish persons incapable of seeing the light are called Māyāvādīs, *karmīs,* or wayward nondevotees.[6]

In a lecture of 1932, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura stated how some disciples considered that by his spending profusely on preaching programs and printing he was embezzling their hard-earned collections. He mentioned by name a particular leading devotee as one of several who thought it better to keep those funds in the bank. "But," he continued, "my aim is not to make provisions and lay bricks for rascals who will come in the future. Possibly the structures already made will one day become dens of ganja and vice." He further commented that some of his men had voiced the opinion that now there were enough books and magazines, so all printing activities should be scrapped; there was no need for further hard work, for by showing the deity and receiving collections the *maṭha-vāsīs* could live happily.[7]

A sannyasi once returned from a speaking engagement and declared, "I delivered a superb speech that was much appreciated, so I shouldn't take ordinary rice *prasāda.* Cook puris for me." When Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī heard of this he became disappointed and said, *karilām sannyāsī haya gelo vilāsī:* "I made them renunciants, but they became voluptuaries"—a ditty he often repeated in his later years. He often stated that several of his sannyasis were giving lectures simply to acquire prestige.

He sometimes referred to the *bābu-giri* (foppishness) of a number of his disciples, and in a lecture at the end of 1932 he particularly addressed the sannyasis:

> For the sake of sincere Hari-*sevā,* to facilitate the smooth progress of worldwide preaching of Hari-*kathā,* I am giving the preachers thousands upon thousands of vehicles, and have no objection to that. But why get into a car if you consider it something material? Such persons have no right to get in a car. If they do, they will become sense enjoyers. The car should not be given to those eager to ride it not for the sake of serving Hari-guru-Vaiṣṇavas but to flaunt their own grandeur, who by deeming it material become sense enjoyers and travelers on the path to hell. For such persons, using cars becomes a means of livelihood. Why should persons who do not with mind, body, and words sincerely serve the Lord, who do not give their very selves for serving Hari-guru-Vaiṣṇavas, ride in cars?
>
> Again, if another edition of the *sahajiyā-sampradāya* increases, then we are as good as dead. Therefore I had proposed that all *tridaṇḍa-sannyāsīs* should come to Ekāyana Maṭha and no further go for *bhikṣā.* Instead I will go begging and feed you. Why do you imitate me? I am not a *tridaṇḍī;* I am fallen. You are all purifiers, not fallen like I. Is there anything wrong in my considering you purifiers and making you gurus? Deeming you as purifiers I have made you into gurus, so why do you pretend to be anything else? The *tridaṇḍī* beggars should at every moment be engaged in Hari-*sevā* with body, mind, and words. With what hope we came to serve Hari—and what position we have now come

to![8]

Attempting to drive out institutional dross, in a letter of 25 April 1933 he gave a warning via a series of instructions to certain seemingly intractable *maṭha-vāsīs:*

> If our *hari-bhajana* decreases, then our outlook will become like that of materialists and will devour us.
>
> 1) Whatever sannyasis do for personal sense gratification should be done by going barefoot, never using shoes nor conveyances. They should not even use the worst vehicles, let alone the first-class ones.
>
> 2) They should never accept service from another. They should never engage anyone to rub their body with oil or massage their feet.
>
> 3) Gormandizing and making independent arrangements for eating are to be wholly forsworn.
>
> 4) Sannyasis should never go to a physician or take medication according to their own wish. It is the duty of a sannyasi to serve the non-sannyasis.
>
> 5) A sannyasi residing within a Maṭha should give up the mentality "I am to be worshiped and served" and reside in the Maṭha for the sake of serving all others; otherwise, he should return home.
>
> 6) Excessive *bābu-giri,* drinking too much milk, and luxurious eating should be completely forsworn.
>
> 7) There is no need for bodybuilders to reside in the Maṭha, nor should it be like a gentleman's club. Only devotees should stay in the Maṭha.
>
> 8) Strengthening the senses by taking medicines and tonics and trying to spread one's domination to attract others' wives, or desiring to do so, should entirely be given up.
>
> 9) We should always remember that Kṛṣṇa is the only Lord and enjoyer of all and that "I am the servant of everybody."
>
> 10) One should serve a devotee according to his level of *bhakti.* We cannot attain any auspiciousness as long as we are not delivered from the evil elephant of considering that others should serve us.
>
> 11) The fire of lust that burns for sensual indulgence should be extinguished.
>
> 12) A *brahmacārī* should not wish to become a sannyasi to procure enhanced sense enjoyment. The desire to dominate is not at all devotional service.

13) To consider a sannyasi a *vilāsī* (sensualist), and wanting to become a sannyasi with that motive, should be totally rejected.

When a sannyasi needs any item it is the duty of *maṭha-vāsīs* to take care of his requirement. If a sannyasi is free from false ego then the *maṭha-vāsīs* should serve him.

One who indulges his senses and is deceptive cannot serve the Lord or His devotees.

14) We should be most careful that no type of *bābu-giri* enters the Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, and associated Maṭhas, which would ruin the sannyasis, *gṛhasthas,* and *brahmacārīs.* The examples that we are getting should not be tolerated. Like the sannyasis, the householders should overcome the urges of desire and anger.

15) We must be alert not to fall to the same condition as persons creating their own misfortune by being averse to serving Hari-guru-Vaiṣṇavas.

16) Bragging, foppery, and deceitfulness are to be wholly given up by *maṭha-vāsīs.* We should never forget that Kṛṣṇa is to be served at every moment. And even more indispensable is service to Vaiṣṇavas.

There must not be any unnecessary attendant, and sannyasis or preachers must not be provided with any vehicle unless solely for the church's (Mission's) use.* If sannyasis must go to a shop or dispensary for any reason other than service to the Maṭha, they should go on foot. Even if the car is idle, still they should not take it; they should not use any conveyance.

The Maṭha is not a place for *bābu-giri;* the spiritual hospital is not meant for its patients to display foppery. It is better if they behave that way by staying at home. Instead of wearing red, they can be clad in white cloth with a *kaccha* and sent back home. Those who want foppery, opulent provender, and medicine can go back home and care for their family. Then they will not have to identify themselves with the Maṭha. Sannyasis who do not indulge in foppery should be recognized as Gauḍīya Maṭha sannyasis. The rest should be sent back home. Even if consequently our manpower depletes, still it is better. If those who have taken shelter of the Maṭha but are motivated by their bellies and genitals are driven away, the expenses of the Maṭha will be reduced, and also worldly disturbances.

Those who come to render devotional service are *brahmacārīs, gṛhasthas, vānaprasthas,* and sannyasis. The Maṭha will not give shelter to persons who do not perform devotional service, for they are enemies of the Maṭha. “I have rendered so much service to the Maṭha, so I will ride in the car, boss others around, and demand respect. I must have a big share in the leadership and management of the Maṭha”—that mentality should never be encouraged. Such is the talk of mundane householders. Those serving the Maṭha should do so with no expectation of return.

> The *jīva* invites difficulties by carping about, scandalizing, and unnecessarily gossiping about others. One should always covet auspiciousness. One can control his mind and extirpate residual desires by serving the holy name.[9]

Similarly, in the essay "'Baḍa Āmi' o 'Bhālo Āmi,'" Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura alluded to the fermenting disquiet among his disciples.[†] Therein he analyzed the intrinsic nature of the materialistic consciousness that induces an aspiring devotee to attempt to become big (*baḍa*) rather than good (*bhālo*) and thus sidetracks him from the precious goal of *śuddha-bhakti*.[10]

But despite Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's endeavors to keep the mission pure, many of his disciples did not care to fully submit themselves to his instructions. For instance, it was well known that some devotees went to *yātrā* performances or the cinema, which mostly showed religious films yet were forbidden for Gauḍīya Maṭha members.

Not losing heart, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura continued to dynamically expand propaganda efforts. He continued touring extensively throughout India, from the Himālayas and Assam down to the southern tip, and from his headquarters in Bengal westward to the Arabian Sea. Desiring to bring Caitanya Mahāprabhu's teachings to places where they were little known, he established more new Maṭhas in major cities outside Bengal and Orissa. With a party of senior devotees he would go to a city where known sympathizers resided, and with their help conduct lecture and *kīrtana* programs, gradually attracting support while looking for a suitable house to rent as a preaching center. As soon as such a base was secured and activities inaugurated, he would move on, leaving one or two competent disciples to continue the work. After a fledgling congregation had sufficiently developed he would return to install deities. In this way temples were gradually founded at Lucknow, New Delhi, Patna, Haridwar, Gayā, and Bombay. Although generally only Bengalis took interest in these new Gauḍīya Maṭhas, eventually several persons indigenous to those locales also became disciples of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Executive Rivalry

Despite Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's full involvement in preaching, and his striving to keep his followers likewise absorbed, during this period a serious misunderstanding arose between some of his leading disciples, from which two groups emerged. One centered around Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu, the main manager of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, and the other aligned with Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu. Although Vāsudeva Prabhu had served under Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu when first joining the mission, soon he also became recognized as a leader. Kuñja Bihārī was ever busy with financial, legal, and other administrative concerns, and despite being well versed in Gauḍīya *siddhānta,* did not appear as spiritual as Vāsudeva Prabhu, who was constantly rapt in *kīrtana,* writing, studying, and explicating *śāstra*.

Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu and Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu had significantly different perspectives on how to best serve the mission. Vāsudeva Prabhu's associates, mostly intellectuals producing publications, emphasized purity through intensive *bhajana.* Kuñja Bihārī's supporters, involved primarily in matters such as collecting funds and establishing *maṭhas,* tended to consider the other group as mere theoreticians doing little of practical value. These divergent approaches led to considerable strain, yet the differing parties remained united and mutually respectful on the platform of service to their master. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura explained that the scholarly group was serving his *vāṇī* (instruction) and the worldly-active group his *vapu* (body); although both were required, *vāṇī* was paramount, for *vapu* was meant only to facilitate *vāṇī.*

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had several articles published anonymously in which, by philosophical analysis and without giving names, he sought to remind erring followers of the purpose for which they had joined him. For instance, "Sevār Khatiyān" (Report of service), a 1930 *Gauḍīya* essay, clearly indicated the inadequacies of those Gauḍīya Maṭha members who, although ever busy in apparent service, had never properly heard or heeded *sarasvatī-vāṇī,* and whose seeming *vapu-sevā* thus merely nourished their lingering desires for *lābha-pūjā-pratiṣṭhā.* The main points for the article had been dictated by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī to Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu, who together with Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda Prabhu had then developed it. The accused devotees approached their *gurudeva,* and to avoid directly blaming him, asked why Vāsudeva and Sundarānanda had printed it. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī replied, "Whoever cannot tolerate this article has never taken birth in Gauḍīya Maṭha. If we are criticized for acting wrongly, no one will excuse us. I too will be culpable. Therefore it was right to publish this, so that there may be reform. If there is no energy in the powerhouse, then even thousands of lightbulbs cannot give illumination. Similarly, without purity and sincerity, there is no use in having many followers and a big institution."[11]

Much malcontent centered on a leading administrator, a *gṛhastha,* and when it became obvious that he was peculating large sums, the sannyasis and *brahmacārīs* resolved to give him nothing more. They stopped going out for preaching and *bhikṣā* and deputed Śrīmat Śrīdhara Mahārāja to verbalize their concerns to their *gurudeva.* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was pacing up and down the veranda of Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha chanting *japa* when Śrīdhara Mahārāja approached him, yet

he stopped and listened intently. His response was unexpected: “Why are you grumbling? Your minds have become distorted. Others may have insufficient judiciousness to care about the absolute goal, but why don't *you* concentrate on that? Have you come for Hari-*bhajana,* or to count money? Can you not reform your godbrother? If I had to employ a manager as expert as he, I would have to pay a considerable salary. Suppose he *is* defalcating. Why begrudge him? If you also need money, I will arrange it for you.” Śrīdhara Mahārāja bowed his head and admitted, “Our way of thinking was mistaken.” He returned to his anxiously waiting godbrothers and explained, “We have come to perform *bhajana,* not to acquire money or prestige. If others are bent on destroying themselves by looting, we shouldn't be preoccupied with them, but should simply focus on our own *bhajana.*”

But dissatisfaction with that manager did not cease. After a moneyed godbrother of his passed away, the wives of the departed devotee transferred their estate to a trust intended for Gauḍīya Maṭha work, giving that leading manager a controlling position thereof. When other godbrothers heard of this, they suspected that he would usurp the trust property for personal use. Some time later that devotee remarked, “Why are my godbrothers interfering with my business?” Thereupon Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī could understand that this previously intimately entrusted associate regarded the mission as simply a material enterprise, and thenceforth distanced himself from that disciple.

Upon the death of his mother in 1934, that leading manager decided to perform her *śrāddha* according to *smārta,* rather than Vaiṣṇava, rites. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī sent three letters instructing him otherwise, but to no avail. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī lamented that the following of the *smārta* method by a prominent Gauḍīya Maṭha figure would be the downfall of the Mission. Yet when Bhakti Sāraṅga Prabhu complained about that same godbrother, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī responded, “If he is still willing to do service, why should I reject him?” Bhakti Sāraṅga Prabhu was struck at his *gurudeva's* largess, in his overlooking a person's manifest faults to keep alive whatever devotional spirit existed within him.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's followers also quarreled over pettier issues, such as occupancy of rooms in the showpiece Maṭha at Bāg-bazar. Deeply disappointed, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura often quoted the Bengali proverb *duṣṭa garu ceye śūnya goyāla bhālo:* “Better to have an empty cowshed than a troublesome cow.” He would elaborate:

> There is no need for “bad cows” that harm others. A single “good cow” is sufficient. We want a living source, not so-called sannyasis.[*] If our mission does not flourish with a real living source, then we will distribute the stones and bricks to the poor for one paisa each, or rent the temple to them. If there is no good soul in the mission, I do not want it. I don't need “bad cows.”[12]

During this period Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī became highly critical of certain disciples. Beseeching all to put aside their differences and work cooperatively, he often spoke of the need for a “cementing policy.”[13] He repeatedly tried to correct the unruly and power-hungry,

speaking to them individually and also addressing their waywardness in *iṣṭa-goṣṭhīs*—but to little avail. During his last visit to Purī, he instructed ashram residents:

> All *maṭha-vāsīs* should constantly be engaged in serving Hari-guru-Vaiṣṇavas, and always hear and discuss Hari-*kathā.* If one becomes averse to Hari-*kathā* and Hari-*sevā,* he will again become ensnarled in material desires. Then time will be spent in gossiping, rapping others, fighting, and gratifying the senses. If *maṭha-vāsīs* do not understand that Vaiṣṇava-*sevā* is the most beneficial activity, they will not progress in devotion. One has to cultivate *śuddha-bhakti* by sincerely serving the Vaiṣṇavas, and by endeavoring to please them with body, mind, and soul.[14]

Despite problems, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura continued pushing forward the movement, and often expressed unmixed appreciation for those devotees who selflessly assisted him. Indeed, during this period many positive accomplishments were realized. New centers were opened and Theistic Exhibitions held. In Calcutta, regular lectures attended by the elite of the city were delivered at the prestigious Albert Hall. A milestone was the completion of the publication of a multi-volume edition of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The crowning glory of all Gauḍīya Maṭha activities hitherto came in 1933, with the dispatching of preachers to the West.

Early in 1935, the proverbially pious Rāya Choudhary zamindar family of Baliyati, Dacca District, who, of their own accord and at their own cost, had already erected the temple and all other buildings of the Śrī Gadāi-Gaurāṅga Maṭha in their village, donated for a plot of prime land in the heart of Dacca city for constructing permanent premises for Śrī Mādhva Gauḍīya Maṭha—envisioned to include the biggest temple in all East Bengal and Assam.[*]

In January 1935 the governor of Bengal, His Excellency Sir John Anderson, visited the headquarters of the Mission in Māyāpur. The Calcutta *Statesman* (17 January) observed, "The success of [the Mission's] activities is testified to by the visit of the ruler of the province to Śrī Caitanya Maṭha in Māyāpur, which is fast growing into a great center of pilgrimage and settlement."

The Vyāsa-*pūjā* for the sixty-first anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's appearance was observed at Purī on 23 February 1935. It was a magnificent function, chaired by the king of Purī, Gajapati Rāmacandra-deva Bāhādura. The next day Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī took his crew on a tour of Śrī Puruṣottama-*dhāma.*

On 21 April 1935, after visiting the noteworthy sites of Gayā, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī stated:

> This is our guru's place. Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī was in the preceptorial line of Śrī Madhva, Śrīla Īśvara Purī followed after him, and the Supreme Lord Śrī Gaurasundara in His pastime as *jagad*-guru declared the success of His trip to Gayā to be His ideal induction into the Mādhva line. Gayā is a principal venue for the followers of Śrī Madhvācārya. Here manifested the source of the flow of *śuddha-bhakti* of the Śrī Brahma-

Mādhva-Gauḍīya *sampradāya.* Hence it is required that the pure adherents of Svarūpa Dāmodara and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī have their own place within this area made most pious by the touch of the lotus feet of Śrīman Mahāprabhu and Śrīla Īśvara Purīpāda. For many days I have cherished this hope in my heart. I once came here twenty-nine years ago. Now after such a long time, it seems that by Kṛṣṇa's wish this desire will be fruitful.

On the following day a commodious rented house was inaugurated by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura as the Gayā Gauḍīya Maṭha.

Six

Winding Up His Pastimes

Hints of Departure

For several years prevenient to his passing away, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī often spoke of its inevitability by referring to "the residual portion of my life" or "this last stage of my life," or by stating, "I don't have much time left" or "I do not know how much longer Kṛṣṇa will keep me here." In 1927 he wrote:

> Just as Mahārāja Parīkṣit listened to *Bhāgavatam* in his last days, I too desire the association of devotees in my final days. Where there is no Hari-*kathā,* it doesn't matter how many friends and relatives are there or how comfortable the situation is. In my concluding sojourn, such places and association strike me as extremely unnecessary and undesirable.[1]

Around 1930, at the annual festival of the Rāmānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha in Kovvur, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī told the devotees taking *mahā-prasāda* there, "The sun is about to set. You won't get delicious *mahā-prasāda* like this in the future. Such a function will no longer be held."[2]

In a lecture of 1932, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura noted that from the beginning of his endeavors, even before founding the Gauḍīya Maṭha, he had been beset by immeasurable obstacles. In transcendental grief he lamented that he was deprived of service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā–Vraja-mohana and Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha. Quoting Śrī Advaita Ācārya's elliptic instruction to Mahāprabhu to wind up His pastimes (Cc 3.19.20), he then stated that now the time had come to sing the song of the Avantī *brāhmaṇa:*

> *nūnaṁ me bhagavāṁs tuṣṭaḥ sarva-deva-mayo hariḥ*
> *yena nīto daśām etāṁ nirvedaś cātmanaḥ plavaḥ*
>
> Bhagavān Hari, who contains within Himself all the demigods, must be satisfied with me. It is He who has brought me to this suffering condition and forced me to experience detachment, which is the boat to carry me over this ocean of material life.[3] (SB 11.23.28)

From early 1935, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī regularly hinted at his imminent passing. While lecturing in Dacca he declared, "Our span of life is short. Our life will be crowned with success if the body wears out while constantly speaking Hari-*kathā*." He himself displayed the paragon of such advice during the annual festival of Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha in 1935 by delivering a sixteen-day series of extraordinary lectures on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* analyzing in detail its conceptions, theology, and teachings.

Feeling increasingly disgusted with several of his disciples, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would comment on their proclivity for eating and sleeping and their having no inspiration for broadcasting the cult of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He lamented that despite having so many disciples, most of them were *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs,* fit for *arcana* but not for preaching. On seeing

that the number of his neophyte disciples was swelling, he decided to depart.[4*]

In the last few years of his manifest presence he often quoted verses that stress the uselesness of temporal attachments:

tasmād idaṁ jagad aśeṣam asat-svarūpaṁ
svapnābham asta-dhiṣaṇaṁ puru-duḥkha-duḥkham
tvayy eva nitya-sukha-bodha-tanāv anante
māyāta udyad api yat sad ivāvabhāti

Therefore this entire universe, which like a dream is by nature unreal, yet appears real and thus covers one's consciousness and assails him with repeated miseries. This universe appears real because it is manifested by the potency of illusion emanating from You, whose unlimited transcendental forms are full of eternal happiness and knowledge. (SB 10.14.22)

karmaṇāṁ pariṇāmitvād āviriñcyād amaṅgalam
vipaścin naśvaraṁ paśyed adṛṣṭam api dṛṣṭa-vat

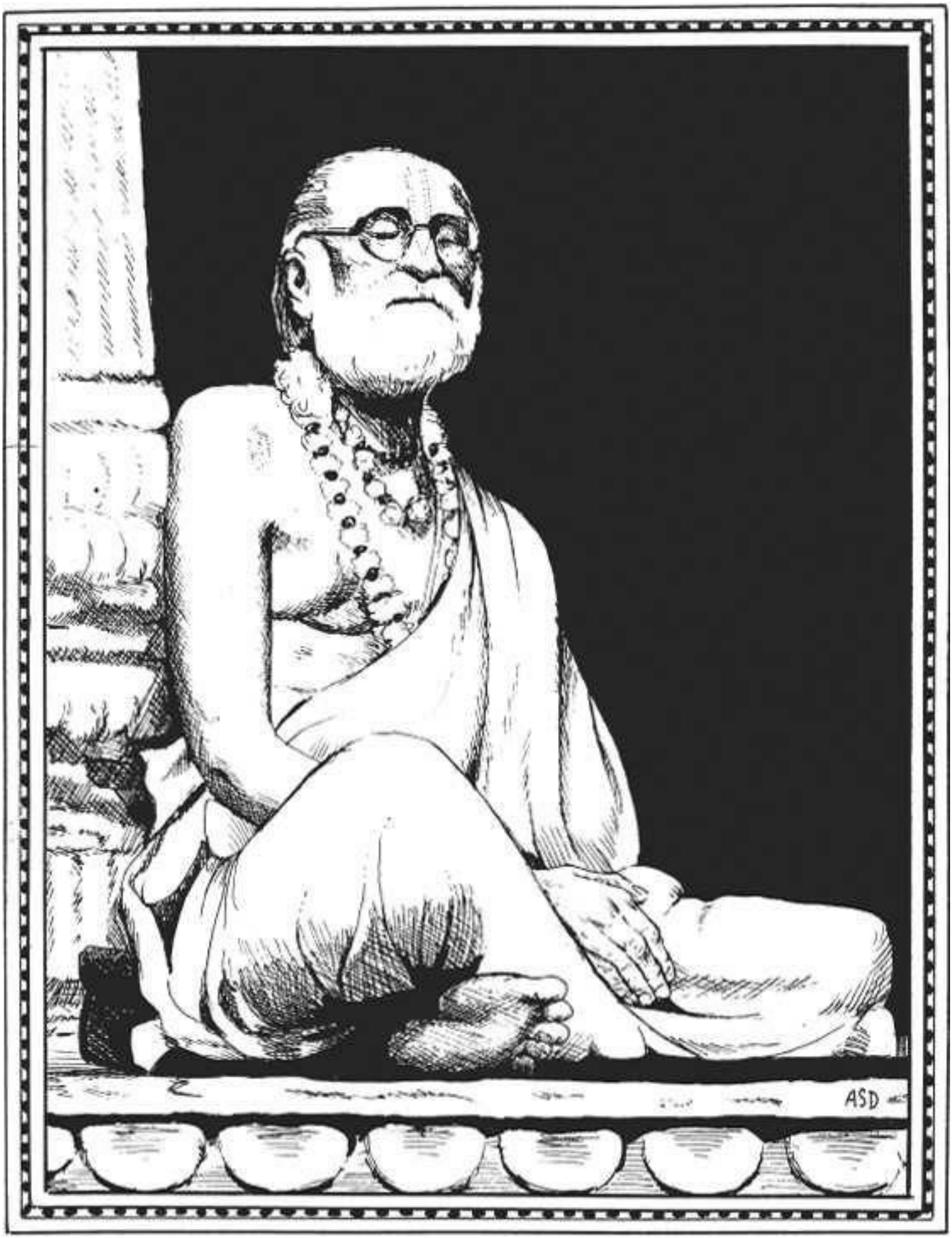
Material activity is subject to constant transformation, and thus from the planet of Lord Brahmā on down there is simply inauspiciousness. A wise man can understand that just as everything he observes is subject to destruction, so also are all things that he cannot directly see. (SB 11.19.18)

During this period he frequently recited *mādhava hām pariṇāma nirāśā:* "O Mādhava, as a consequence (of the distress experienced in trying to enjoy material life) we are forlorn."[5] He several times narrated the apologue of the wise old monkey, to demonstrate that persons who faithfully abide by the instructions of a genuine guru and thereby engage unflinchingly in Hari-*bhakti* will certainly attain ultimate welfare; but those who follow evil companions, considering that the ageing advisor might be deluded and not know more than anyone else, will undoubtedly reap a disastrous result.[*]

Accompanied by 150 to 200 devotees, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī observed Kārtika-*vrata* in 1935 at Rādhā-kuṇḍa. During that period he revealed the depth of his dissatisfaction to his householder disciple Śrī Abhaya Caraṇāravinda, who had come to visit him. He lamented that even in his presence his foremost disciples were quarrelling over trifling arrangements for fleshly comfort, causing him much anguish. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī told Abhaya, *āgun jvalibe,* "Fire will burn," indicating that a conflagration of party interests would erupt in the Gauḍīya Maṭha and destroy it. "When we were living in a rented house at Ultadingi," he said, "if we could collect two hundred or three hundred rupees we were living very nicely. We were happier then. But since getting this marble palace in Bāg-bazar, there has been friction between our men: Who will occupy this room? Who will occupy that room? Who will be the proprietor of this room?' Everyone is planning in different ways. Better to take the marble from the walls, sell it, and use the money to print books."[6]

On 4 November 1935 Sarasvatī Ṭhākura revealed service to deities at the Kuñja-bihārī Maṭha at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, and two days later established a *puṣpa-samādhi* of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in a nearby separate building named Vraja Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja.[†] Only by overcoming bitter opposition from the resident *bābājīs* was the Gauḍīya Maṭha able to acquire these places for worship at Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Bhakti Sāraṅga Prabhu's go-getting, "nothing's impossible" pluck played a crucial role in procuring the requisite plots.

Speaking at the Yogapīṭha on 21 January 1936, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī lambasted materially motivated pseudo-devotees, who had given a bad name to Vaiṣṇava dharma, and pleadingly exhorted his disciples to follow the example of genuine devotees, not cheaters. He cited the case of a rascal who by using a human skull as a drinking vessel had sought to show himself more renounced than Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, and warned, "Give up duplicity. Abide by the ideal of great devotees (*anusaraṇa*); do not imitate them (*anukaraṇa*). Do not pass your days in idleness. Study *Gauḍīya* and *Nadia Prakash* daily. May hypocrisy never enter."[7] He cautioned that it was better to be born as an animal, bird, insect, or any other of the countless thousands of species than to be a hypocrite, for only a person free from hypocrisy can attain real auspiciousness.[8]



Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī in later life, during Cātur-māsya

In February 1936, Vyāsa-*pūjā* of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was celebrated over five days at Śrīvāsa Aṅgana, where Nityānanda Prabhu had performed Vyāsa-*pūjā* for Caitanya Mahāprabhu. After that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura traveled to Calcutta and then to Purī, Ālālanātha, Dacca, Kurukṣetra, Darjeeling, Mathurā, and Vṛndāvana. During this period he endured a heart complaint that gradually made him weaker and weaker. But his preaching spirit flourished unabated.[*]

Back in Calcutta, a prominent doctor brought by Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu advised Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī to curtail his continual speaking, which prompted Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī to discourse to him vigorously for almost an hour on the theme "Life is meant for glorifying Hari, so if that is stopped, then what need is there to carry on living?" Afterward his disciples joked that the doctor came to treat their guru but instead was treated by him.

Observing his *gurudeva's* failing health, Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu asked him who would become the next *ācārya.* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura declined to give any name, saying that an *ācārya* is *svayaṁ-prakāśa* (self-manifested) and cannot be appointed.[9]

In several lectures delivered in 1936, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī stressed the need to follow the example of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in His *antya-līlā* (final pastimes), by concentrating on the main purpose of life—absorption in remembering Kṛṣṇa—and avoiding *asat-saṅga,* association with nondevotees.

Addressing the assembled devotees at the last *tirobhāva-mahotsava* of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura that he would attend, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī spoke of the *bhaktivinoda-dhārā* (line of Bhaktivinoda) and the need to preach:

> One cannot become or make another a Vaiṣṇava. All living beings in the universe are intrinsically Vaiṣṇavas; they simply have to realize it. It is the task of the Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā to assist such realization in every way. The people of this world are simply measuring in terms of caste-ism, nationalism, and other temporary inauspicious social divisions. This measuring should be erased not only in Bengal, not only in India, but all over the universe. Past, present, and future—everyone's auspiciousness will come by preaching about Lord Caitanya. Like itinerant merchants, you should take the wares of Caitanya-*vāṇī* throughout the globe. If necessary, go to all four corners of the earth. Violence to oneself and others under the name of *nirjana-bhajana* must be stopped. Every single door must be knocked on at least once. If the inhabitants sincerely inquire as to which manner of Hari-*bhajana* may be performed aright, tell them that the only way is through the *bhaktivinoda-dhārā.* The *bhaktivinoda-dhārā* must be kept alive by the *kīrtana* of *śrauta-vāṇī.* If *kīrtana* of the truth is stopped, then we will be riven from the *bhaktivinoda-dhārā.*[10]

On 24 October 1936 at Calcutta Port, he saw off Śrī Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī, who was setting sail for England, with instructions to also try to go to America. That same evening Śrīla

Sarasvatī Ṭhākura himself left Calcutta by train and the next morning arrived in Purī. Despite sickness, he lectured regularly there over the next one and a half months.

During this sojourn in Purī, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was approached by a senior judicial officer, Śrī Rādhe-Śyāma Pattnaik, who expressed that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had done many beneficial things for the world but not much for Purī. He suggested that a *bhāgavata-sabhā* (assembly of devotees) be established there, as Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had done at Jagannātha-vallabha Udyāna. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī replied, "The time of my departure has come. What can I do now?" And there were other signs that he was preparing to leave. His mood was increasingly withdrawn and meditative, and he openly and repeatedly vented his inner longing to reside at the foot of Govardhana, often quoting:

> *pratyāśāṁ me tvaṁ kuru govardhana pūrṇām*
>
> O Govardhana! Fulfil my desires.[11]
>
> *nija-nikaṭa-nivāsaṁ dehi govardhana tvam*
>
> O Govardhana! Give me a dwelling place close to you.[12]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura regularly had the full prayers in which these lines appeared recited to him. And each morning he would have *kīrtana* performed in his presence, including singing of "Śrī-rūpa-mañjarī-pada," Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura's composition expressing the quintessence of Gauḍīya theology: service to the intimate maidservants of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Śrīpāda Jājābar Mahārāja, who had previously sung for him in Mathurā, was called from his posting in Gayā to again chant for Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who appreciated both the sweetness of Śrīpāda Jājābar Mahārāja's voice and the sincerity with which he sang.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī also cautioned, "All of you take to sincere Hari-*bhajana*. There are not many more days." This premonitory hint, along with his physical weakness and disquiet and frequent reference to Govardhana-*bhajana,* convinced several devotees that he would soon leave the world.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura made his last journey from Purī to Calcutta on 6 December, despite it being a particularly stinging winter and hence inadvisable for a patient to travel northward. When the time came to depart for the train station, his driver, Śrī Pyārī-mohana Brahmacārī, tooted the car horn to signal that they should leave. Just then Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura noticed his disciple Śrī Jadumaṇi Pattnaik standing there and stopped to inquire about his welfare. Jadumaṇi Prabhu said to his son, "Now take your last *darśana* of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. I think he will not come here again." The boy performed *daṇḍavat* to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who noted his clement mien and sensed his internal distress.

At Purī station Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was seen off by a group of distinguished people, who expressed their admiration for his monumental activities in bro adcasting Lo rd Caitanya's

message throughout India and overseas. En route at Cuttack station, forty devotees headed by Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu were waiting to greet him. During the overnight journey Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura distributed Hari-*kathā* nonstop to his disciples. At Howrah station, a large gathering of devotees received him and escorted him to the Gauḍīya Maṭha amid a *saṅkīrtana* procession in a car profusely decked with flowers. In Calcutta, he immediately resumed his incessant Hari-*kathā,* delivering a several-hour lecture that very morning (7 December).

On 13 December, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura emphasized in his speech at the sixth annual "separation ceremony" of Jagabandhu Bhakti Rañjana Prabhu:

> We are all sojourners on the path of death. Everyone must die. Therefore, whether one is male or female, high or low, king or subject, rich or poor, learned or foolish—he can make this exceedingly rare human form of life successful by becoming a servant of the servant of the eternally pure, completely blissful Śrī Hari. Even in this conditional existence one can become liberated. Hence it is overwhelmingly necessary to try for that.[13]

On the morning of 18 December 1936, in his room at Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī spoke at length to Sundarānanda Prabhu and a few Western devotees, his cheeks becoming red with excitement as he forcefully condemned false discipleship. It was his last talk before he manifested the *līlā* of being bedridden, never to rise again.[*]

Last Days

Shortly thereafter, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura became afflicted by fever. Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu called in some of the most reputed doctors in the city to treat his guru-*mahārāja,* who informed each of them of the temporality of the body and the need to perform Hari-*sevā.* And when a doctor wanted to give him an injection Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura protested, "Why are you disturbing me in this way? Simply chant *harināma,* that's all."

Upon receiving news of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's condition, disciples started streaming in from far and near. On 20 December, he rose and startled the also bedridden Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu, whom he had not seen for several days, by visiting him in his room. About ten days before his disappearance, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī stated that he had much service to perform in Vṛndāvana but because of internal quarrels in the *maṭha* his life was being shortened by ten years.[14]

On 23 December 1936, eight days before leaving this world, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī instructed in a weak, halting voice the devotees assembled at his bedside. Those vital and immortal words were to become famous as his last address, expressing the essence of his perennial message, and would be featured in innumerable publications. Sundarānanda Prabhu jotted them down:

> I have upset many persons' minds. Many might have considered me their enemy, because I was obliged to speak the plain truth of service and devotion toward the Absolute Godhead. I have given them all those troubles only so they might turn their face toward the Personality of Godhead without any desire for gain, and with unalloyed devotion. Surely some day they will be able to understand that.
>
> All of you propagate the message of Rūpa-Raghunātha with supreme enthusiasm. Our ultimate desire is to become dust at the lotus feet of the *rūpānugas.* All should remain united in following the *āśraya-vigraha,* for the sake of serving the *advaya-jñāna.*[*] In this ephemeral sphere you should live somehow or other only for Hari-*bhajana.* In spite of all dangers, criticisms, and discomforts, do not give up Hari-*bhajana.* Don't be disappointed that most people in the world do not accept topics of unduplicitious Kṛṣṇa-*sevā.* Do not forsake your own *bhajana* of *Kṛṣṇa-kathā-śravaṇa-kīrtana,* which is your all in all. With humility like a straw and forbearance like a tree, you should always perform Hari-*kīrtana.*
>
> Let our bodies, which are like those of aged oxen, be offered into the *saṅkīrtana-yajña* of Lord Caitanya and His associates.[†] We do not aspire to be any kind of heroes of karma or dharma, but our constitutional position and all in all is to in every birth to become dust at Śrī Rūpa-Raghunātha's lotus feet. The *bhaktivinoda-dhārā* will never stop. With all your energy, devote yourself to fulfilling the desire of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. There are many among you who are well qualified and able workers. We have no other wish whatsoever. Our only motto is:

adadānas tṛṇaṁ dantair idaṁ yāce punaḥ punaḥ
śrīmad-rūpa-padāmbhoja- dhūliḥ syāṁ janma-janmani

Taking a blade of grass between my teeth, I fall down and pray again and again to become dust at Śrīmad Rūpa's lotus feet, birth after birth.[15]

Certainly there are multiple inconveniences while we are in this mortal domain, but there is no need either to be overwhelmed by them or to try to overcome them. Rather, even during the duration of our present life we must become acquainted with what we shall gain after surpassing all those difficulties, and what shall be the mode of our permanent existence. In this world we are compelled to make decisions regarding objects that evoke our attraction and revulsion, both those that we want and those we do not. Attachment and detachment in this damned existence increase according to the degree that we are separated from Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. When we are able to transcend the position of attachment and detachment in this world of death and are attracted by the holy name of Godhead, then only can we understand the taste of Kṛṣṇa-*sevā-rasa.*

At the present time, Kṛṣṇa's instructions seem highly startling and perplexing. Knowingly or unknowingly, everyone who is considered a human being is more or less struggling to eliminate those invading elements that baffle our perception of our eternal need. Our only requirement is to enter into the kingdom of our eternal necessity, by going beyond dualities. We have no love or hatred toward anyone in this world. All arrangements made herein are but temporary. Therefore that supreme goal is indispensably necessary for everyone in this world. All of you should work unitedly and harmoniously for the same objective of attaining eligibilty for *sevā* to the original *āśraya-vigraha.*

May the conceptions of the *rūpānugas* flow in the world. Let us never feel the slightest dejection while engaged in the seven-tongued flame of *saṅkīrtana-yajña.*[*] Only if we have undaunted and ever-increasing attachment for it shall we achieve all perfection. Under the guidance of the *rūpānugas,* all of you should fearlessly and with utmost energy preach Rūpa-Raghunātha-*kathā.*[16]

As phone calls bombarded the *maṭha,* and two telegrams per day arrived from London with anxious inquiries about his condition, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī himself remained anxious for the spiritual condition of his disciples. On 24 December, noticing the absence of the sounds of evening *kīrtana* and lecture, he asked why these had been discontinued, and immediately had them resumed.

On the morning of 31 December, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura requested Śrīmad B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja to chant "Śrī-rūpa-mañjarī-pada." But after Śrīdhara Mahārāja started singing, Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu directed that he stop and the reputed *kīrtanīyā* Praṇavānanda Prabhu take over. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura then stated that he was not concerned with melodious intonations.[*] So Śrīdhara Mahārāja recommenced.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura next asked Navīna Kṛṣṇa Vidyālaṅkāra Prabhu to chant Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's song beginning *tuṅhu dayā-sāgara tārayite prāṇī,* which is based on the second verse of *Śikṣāṣṭaka* and concludes:

> *atiśaya manda nātha bhāga hāmārā*
> *nāhi janamala nāme anurāga mora*
> *bhakativinoda-citta duḥkhe vibhora*
>
> O Lord, I am extremely unfortunate. My attachment for the holy name has never come about. The heart of Bhaktivinoda is overwhelmed with sadness.

Upon hearing these last lines, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī clapped his hand to his forehead as profuse tears of humility decorated his cheeks, warning of the lamentable plight of being unattracted to the holy name. Navīna Kṛṣṇa Prabhu stopped singing.

That morning Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura also gave many important instructions for continuing the movement, enjoining his disciples to form a governing body of ten or twelve members and cooperatively conduct missionary activities under their guidance, and that Kuñja Bihārī should throughout his life remain as the manager. He ordered that construction of a *nāṭya-mandira* be begun at Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja. He asked one disciple, "Among yourselves, who do you consider most knowledgeable of *siddhānta*?" The reply was, "Vāsudeva Prabhu." Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura affirmed this and stated that Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu should continue to preach *rūpa-raghunātha-vāṇī.* He requested that Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda Prabhu be directed to complete and publish *Vaiṣṇava-mañjuṣā,* expressed indebtedness to Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu and thanked him for services rendered, and encouraged Vrajeśvarī Prasāda Prabhu of Patna to remain enthusiastic. He asked that his thanks be conveyed to Sakhī Caraṇa Bhakti Vijaya Prabhu for his service to Śrīdhāma Māyāpur, and told Śrīmad Bhāratī Mahārāja, "You are a practical man, so look after the mission. Either in love or rupture, it is good to maintain the same purpose.[*] Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura lived by the principle of Śrī Rūpa and Śrī Raghunātha. We too should live according to that principle."

Then he delivered his final message: "All of you, present and absent, accept my blessings. Remember that our sole duty and dharma is to propagate service to the Lord and His devotees."

Disappearance

The next morning, 1 January 1937, at just about 5:20, Praṇavānanda Brahmacārī's bedside vigil was completed. He was handing over the fan and oxygen funnel to Kṛṣṇānanda Brahmacārī when Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī aroused and whispered, "Who is there?" "It's me, Praṇavānanda, Prabhupāda." Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī uttered, "O, Praṇavānanda Prabhu?" Praṇavānanda then asked, "How are you feeling, Prabhupāda?" Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī murmured, "Oh... Oh... Kṛṣṇa... Kṛṣṇa..." Hardly had Praṇavānanda left the room when he was called back by Kṛṣṇānanda Prabhu: "Praṇava, come quickly. It's over!"

Thus, after sixty-two years and ten months of manifesting unflinching devotion to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in this world, Śrī Vārṣabhānavī-dayita dāsa rejoined Them in the hour of Their *niśānta-līlā* (predawn pastimes) of Their eternal cycle of daily activities in Vraja—at the hour after Their nocturnal sports, when They rest in intertwined embrace, becoming as one body and hence giving an indication of Lord Gaurāṅga's appearance.* It was five-thirty. All the clocks in the *maṭha* stopped simultaneously, their steady ticking soon replaced by wailing and crying from every corner. Some devotees were sobbing as if their hearts would break, some were chanting feverishly with eyes flooded with tears, some swooned, some simply bowed their heads and chanted *harināma,* and some were clapping their foreheads and repeatedly calling out, "O Prabhupāda! O Prabhupāda!" Although the sun had just risen, to the disciples present everything seemed black.

Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu, ever pragmatic, organized the bereaved devotees in performing the required rituals according to *Saṁskāra-dīpikā*. First they laved their departed *gurudeva's* divine form with sandalwood water, then applied *tilaka* on the twelve appropriate parts of his body, draped him in new clothes, and decorated him with flowers, garlands, and sandalwood paste. They laid him on a new bed and brought him for a last *darśana* of the deities he had served for so many years. After circumambulating him, his disciples, several of them crying incessantly, offered him *pūjā, bhoga,* and *ārati* amid continuous *kīrtana* of the *mahā-mantra* and "Je ānilo prema-dhana," Narottama dāsa's most famous song of separation from departed Vaiṣṇavas.

The news spread quickly. When Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's divine figure was taken before the deities at ten o'clock, a huge crowd was waiting for final *darśana*. Then the bedstead with his spiritual body strapped to it was carried from Bāg-bazar to Shealdah Station on the shoulders of disciples, accompanied by massive *saṅkīrtana*. The route was less than two miles, but since it was through perennially busy streets and packed with the mourning public, it took over an hour to traverse. From Shealdah, almost two hundred devotees left toward Māyāpur by a chartered train. At Ranaghat they halted briefly for local people to offer their last respects, and then proceeded to Krishnanagar, where again a sizeable gathering, including leading city officials, was waiting to pay homage to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.*

From Krishnanagar, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's transcendental form was taken

on the roof of a bus to Svarupganj, across the river from Māyāpur. Crossing the river Sarasvatī by boat, the party continued on foot, performing *saṅkīrtana*. On reaching Māyāpur toward evening, the spiritual figure of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was taken around the holy sites, beginning with the Yogapīṭha, Śrīvāsa Aṅgana, and Advaita Bhavan, then to Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, Bhakti Vijaya Bhavan (Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's house), the *samādhi* of Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, and Avidyā-haraṇa Nāṭya-mandira, where *ārati* was offered to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. *Kīrtana* continued throughout the night as devotees excavated the site they had chosen for the *samādhi,* between the Śrī Caitanya Maṭha temple and Bhakti Vijaya Bhavan.

Early the next morning Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's transcendental body was bathed with Gaṅgā water. After this, Śrīmad Bhakti Pradīpa Tīrtha Mahārāja applied with sandalwood paste the *samādhi* mantra on his *gurudeva's* body, which was then dressed in new clothes and brought to the site of the *samādhi,* and amid prostrations, prayer, glorification, and offering of flowers, was placed on a marble throne covered with fine cloth. *Kīrtana* continued to resound while sandalwood paste, scented oils, flowers, and garlands were offered at his lotus feet. After another *ārati,* and to the accompaniment of his favorite songs, such as "Śrī-rūpa-mañjarī-pada," "Svānanda-sukhada kuñja manohara," and "Yaśomatī-nandana," Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's divine form was interred in *samādhi*.

Śrīmat Śrīdhara Mahārāja and Praṇavānanda Prabhu performed a Vaiṣṇava *homa*.[†] Bhāratī Mahārāja read the *tirobhāva* pastime of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura from *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (3.11), and being requested by Śrīdhara Mahārāja, also recited Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's poetic envoy to his *Anubhāṣya* on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta.* Śrīmat Śrīdhara Mahārāja was requested to chant "Śrī-rūpa-mañjarī-pada," as he had done just two days before at his *gurudeva's* bidding. Then the devotees circumambulated the *samādhi,* singing "Je ānilo prema-dhana" and "Gurudeva, kṛpā bindu diyā." The ceremony was concluded by group recitation of the *praṇāma-mantras* glorifying Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

News of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's departure was broadcast on All-India Radio, and an official day of mourning was observed in Bengal. In Calcutta and other places, many eminent people gathered to eulogize Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī at memorial functions. The Corporation of Calcutta held a special meeting on 13 January 1937 in tribute to the memory of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and issued a resolution expressing its members' deep sorrow. The mayor, Sir Hari Śaṅkara Pal, addressed the councilors:

> I rise to condole the passing away of His Divine Grace Paramahaṁsa Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, the president-*acāryā* of the Gauḍīya Maṭha of Calcutta and the great leader of the Gauḍīya movement throughout the world. This melancholy event happened on the first day of this new year.
>
> Born in 1874, he dedicated his whole life to religious pursuits and dissemination of the cultural wealth of this great and ancient land of ours. An intellectual giant, he elicited the admiration of all for his unique scholarship, high and varied attainments, original thinking,

and wonderful exposition of many difficult branches of knowledge.

With invaluable contributions he enriched many journals. He was the author of some devotional literature of repute. He was one of the most powerful and brightest exponents of the cult of Vaiṣṇavism, his utterances and writings displaying a deep study of comparative philosophy and theology. Catholicity of his views, soundness of his teachings and, above all, his dynamic personality and the irresistible force of the pure and simple life, had attracted thousands of followers of his message of love and service to the Absolute as propagated by Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya.

He was the founder and guiding spirit of the Śrī Caitanya Maṭha at Śrī Māyāpur (Nadia) and the Gauḍīya Maṭha of Calcutta. The Gauḍīya movement, to which his contribution is no small one, has received a setback at the passing away of such a great soul. His departure has created a void in the spiritual horizon of India, which is difficult to be filled up.[17]

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda later summarized the divine passing of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī:

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura came in this world to execute the mission of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. So he executed it. And when it was required, he left this place and went to another place to do the same business.[18]

Part Two:
His Message, Mission, and Personality

One

Qualities and Character

The character of all Vaiṣṇavas is profound and unfathomable. Yet each manifests divine traits in different degrees and in various ways. For instance, Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya fully conquered lust, Śrī Dāmodara Paṇḍita was famed for his objective criticism, Śrī Haridāsa Ṭhākura personified forbearance, and Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī and Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī were exceptionally meek and humble.[1]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was focused, tenacious, and staunch. Like his guru, Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī, he was steadfast in renunciation and *bhajana*. Despite being raised in middle-class comfort, his innate tendency was toward austerity. As an ideal *ācārya,* he never compromised his practice of devotional principles. He carefully observed the details of *sādhana-bhakti,* such as always wearing *tilaka,* regularly chanting the *mahā-mantra* on beads and reciting *gāyatrī,* and attending *āratis*. He rose early each morning, usually before anyone else, and rarely napped during the day. Being a *nitya-siddha,* there was no need for Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to follow such ordinances meant for the uplift of neophytes, yet he did so to set an example for and induce faith within his disciples and the public at large. He averred that if he were not exemplary, no one would obey him. Whatever he asked of others, he himself followed. Had he relaxed his standards even slightly, *prākṛta-sahajiyās* would have taken that as an excuse to continue whimsically neglecting the scripturally prescribed regulations of devotional service.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī often quoted from *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (1.2.12) the terms *śrotriya* (learned in *śāstra,* as received in guru-*paramparā*) and *brahma-niṣṭha* (fully dedicated to Godhead), emphasizing that these qualifications are necessary for a genuine guru, and that one who has them will naturally also be of irreproachable character. By personally fulfilling these criteria he established the scriptural standard for accepting the role of guru. Moreover, his inestimable qualities distinguished him as a transcendental giant fit to be addressed as *jagad*-guru. As Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī had told Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura:

> *āpane ācare keha, nā kare pracāra*
> *pracāra karena keha, nā karena ācāra*
>
> *‘ācāra,’ ‘pracāra’—nāmera karaha ‘dui’ kārya*
> *tumi—sarva-guru, tumi jagatera ārya*
>
> Some devotees follow the practices of *bhakti* but do not preach, whereas others preach but do not practice properly. By your behavior and preaching, you simultaneously perform both duties in relation to the holy name. You are the guru of the whole world, for you are the most advanced devotee in the world. (Cc 3.4.102–3)

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was intense. And he intensely desired that everyone he came in contact

with—and indeed the entire universe—embrace his mood of unremitting dedication to Kṛṣṇa. His personality was permeated with utter rejection of anything smacking of worldliness, and because his nigh insistence that others similarly abandon all attachments and fully surrender to Kṛṣṇa resembled the attack of an aggressor, he was often misunderstood by those he sought to help.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's very presence inspired awe. His glance was so powerful and penetrating that few could bear it. His every movement and gesture expressed extraordinary inner strength. Many smug persons became humbled and submissive simply by entering his presence, as did Maharaja Adhirāja Vijaya Cāṅda Bāhādura of Burdwan, who related:

> I often went to see Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, and naturally bowed at his lotus feet whenever I did. Yet at one point I considered, "I am the great Maharaja of Burdwan. Among all the highly respectable people in Bengali society, none is more famous or respected than I. Who is this sadhu in comparison to me? Why should I prostrate before him? Next time I won't, and I'll watch how he reacts." On my next visit I barged in on him and blurted, "I've something to say to you." But before I could speak further, my head automatically went down to the floor in front of him. I was unable to wait to see his response to my rudeness.[2]

The canon governing Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's life was *kṛṣṇārthe akhila-ceṣṭā*: "Everything should be done for Kṛṣṇa." (Cc 2.22.126) Always busy satisfying Kṛṣṇa in innumerable ways, he unwaveringly personified that maxim. Day and night, wherever he happened to be, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was constantly absorbed in topics of Kṛṣṇa. After his heart condition manifested, when people would ask, "How are you?" he often replied, "I am alright; but Kuñja Prabhu does not indulge me in Hari-*kathā,* hence I am unwell."[*] He had no interest even in bathing in the ocean at Purī or in holy rivers, for he considered such activities a diversion from his life's engagement of immersion in *bhajana,* preaching, and writing.[†] Although he manifested different moods at different times, he was always thinking of Kṛṣṇa, and was never frivolous, mundane, or mediocre. Occasionally he became pensive and withdrawn. Sometimes he spoke so ferociously that others became unnerved and tremulous. When delivering Hari-*kathā* to his students he was formal and grave.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī exemplified Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's statement that wherever the eyes of one with Kṛṣṇa-*prema* fall, he sees only Kṛṣṇa.[3] Even when observing the apparently prosaic activity of plowing fields, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī respectfully accepted it as an *uddīpana* for service to Kṛṣṇa, because produce from the *maṭha* soil was for offering to Kṛṣṇa and His devotees, and plowing is a reminder of Baladeva Saṅkarṣaṇa, the primeval holder of the plow. When in mountainous areas such as Shillong, Mussoorie, Darjeeling, or Ootacamund, his thoughts inevitably turned to Govardhana, and with great enthusiasm he would continuously douse his companions with Hari-*kathā* pertaining to that most sacred of hills. This pure, natural, spontaneous, intense, and uninterrupted attachment for Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa was Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's inherent and focal lineament, which,

combined with his ability and fervent desire to give Kṛṣṇa to others, revealed him to be an intimate associate of Lord Caitanya come to this plane to execute His mission. As he expressed:

> If a poor man takes the guise of a philanthropist, he can give away only as much as he personally possesses. But the eternal treasure of the Vaiṣṇava is directly Nārāyaṇa. If Nārāyaṇa gives Himself, He holds a little back. But the Vaiṣṇava can give Nārāyaṇa completely. He who possesses genuine knowledge of the whole entity [Kṛṣṇa] is totally devoted to serving Kṛṣṇa in all ways, and there is nothing comparable to the lotus feet of such a person.[4]

Dynamic, resolute, and compelling, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was determined to give Kṛṣṇa to a world unenthusiastic to receive Him. He optimistically embarked on projects that in ordinary estimation seemed unachievable, and persevered until realizing them. For him the word *impossible* did not exist, and upon receiving an order from him, no disciple considered pleading "Impossible!" Indeed, his disciples regarded Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura as empowered with transcendental potency for overcoming the multiple hurdles that unceasingly arose—as had been indicated by a narrow escape just prevenient to his widespread preaching career:

Prior to renting the house at 1 Ultadingi Junction Road, early one morning Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura set out with Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu and Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu to inspect it. Walking along the footpath, he was just about to step under a shop awning when it suddenly crashed down in front of him, its prop having been slightly impacted by a car. Had it collapsed even a second later it would have landed on his head. Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu later commented:

> Who knows whether this dramatic performance of being mysteriously saved from an unthinkable event and imminent danger on the day of starting an auspicious undertaking for founding Śrī Bhaktivinoda Āsana, was a harbinger of the future history of the Gauḍīya Maṭha? The very day on which the initial preparations for establishing a center for propagating actual truth around the universe were made, our *gurudeva* made us understand the *śāstrīya* proclamations *śreyāṁsi bahu vighnāni* (Many obstacles arise in auspicious activities) and *śrī-bhakti-mārga iha kaṇṭaka-koṭi-ruddhaḥ* (In this world the path of devotion is beset with millions of thorns).[5] To propagate the truth, one must be ready to take the burden of numerous varied perils, if not to place one's very life at stake. As the morning speaks for the day, so did our guru-*mahārāja* predict the future of Gauḍīya Maṭha preaching by staging this pastime to indicate that we should be ready.[6]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's legendarily powerful personality defied modish accusations that *bhakti* was for timorous weaklings and effeminates. Yet despite his hard exterior, he was so extraordinarily humble that he often described himself as a fallen soul and would request blessings from his disciples or even from common people. He would join his palms and say, *dāso 'smi,* "I am a servant," to whoever approached him, even before they would offer him respect. No one was allowed to touch his feet, not even young boys.[*] Whenever anyone tried to do so, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would stretch out his long arms to restrain him, saying *dāso 'smi.* He prohibited even his initiated disciples from touching his feet.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī eidetically remembered the names of all his disciples and others he had met. Often when returning to a place, even after a long time, he would ask by name for certain individuals he had previously met there.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was punctilious in receiving visitors. Whenever he received a letter stating that a person was scheduled to arrive on a certain date and time, he would arrange that one or two *brahmacārīs* meet the guest at the station. Even if the visitor knew the way or had not asked for help, still Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would send someone. Once a guest arrived at the *maṭha* late at night and requested *mahā-prasāda* but was told that there was none. Chanting *japa* on the veranda close by, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī heard that and ordered, "See that he gets *mahā-prasāda*. He has come late at night hungry. Prepare something for him, at least flat-rice."

Nor was Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's concern for others limited to those in human form. In *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* he featured articles denouncing the cruelty of, and lauding efforts to curb, hunting and cow slaughter. And when in April 1919 he was traveling by horsecart in a rural area of Midnapore District, the driver repeatedly beat the horses all along the eight- to ten-mile route. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura strongly objected and adjured the local inhabitants to prevent such mistreatment from happening ever again.

Such compassion was intrinsic to this great personage who had dedicated his existence for relieving all living beings of suffering. Thus the character of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī can be properly understood only in terms of his overwhelming desire to propagate *śuddha-bhakti.*

Two

The Revolutionary Preacher of Truth

> The spiritually-minded will judge how many major revolutions in history compare to the revolutionary preaching by the Gauḍīya Maṭha against the materialistic thought-patterns of the world.[1]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī inherited the urge to preach from his father and mentor, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Energized by the Ṭhākura's vision of *śuddha-bhakti* diffusing throughout the globe, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had an unrelenting drive to deliver *śuddha-bhakti* to all *jīvas* in the universe, and even to those beyond it. He wanted to capture the whole territory of *māyā* and convert it to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He could not tolerate that there be any place devoid of Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti.* Not restricted within the cultural horizon of Bengal, he wanted to annihilate misconceptions at all levels in all cultures of human society and implement "full-fledged theism" everywhere. Even though seemingly impossible, he took it as his duty to spread *śuddha-bhakti* by all means and at any cost. To establish Lord Caitanya's mission the fetters of caste, ritual, and indeed all preexisting stereotypes and dogmas would have to be demolished. Hence Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī inevitably became a revolutionary.

His efforts were concentrated in a Bengal where Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism had lost its original dynamism, and from the ethnological perspective had transmuted into yet another component of the vast heterogeneous mosaic known as Hinduism. Although widespread, Vaiṣṇava dharma was enveloped by a thick fog of nescience, having become synonymous with artificial shows of ecstasy, mantras imparted for money, flesh-eating "devotees," cheaters competing to be lauded as avatars, *siddha-praṇālī* initiation for the asking, and descriptions of the amorous pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa bandied about like cheap market gossip. In this way *prākṛta-sahajiyās* had etiolated the movement of Lord Caitanya into a foolish and immoral travesty of Vaiṣṇava dharma. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had to reestablish the genuine *parampará,* which had all but vanished. To purge the Gauḍīya lineage of impurities, he publicly decried ecclesiastical and social conventions that were suffocating Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *sampradāya.* Animated with the heroic spirit of Hanumān in opposing Rāvaṇa, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura committed himself to a lifetime of struggle against the beneficiaries of the rotten status quo.

Preaching meant fighting. Although Indian society had traditionally been deeply religious, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī insisted that mere theocentricity was not sufficient. Thus he openly criticized beliefs and practices held sacral by most Hindus, such as impersonalism and demigod worship. With unfaltering determination he uninhibitedly cudgeled various misrepresentations of Vaiṣṇava dharma, business in the name of religion, caste-ism, atheism, Western cultural chauvinism, sensualism posing as spirituality, and innumerable forms of opinionative and deviant philosophies—whatever fell short of pure devotion to Kṛṣṇa. This was in accord with

the intrinsic purport of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* which singularly among scriptures established the topmost understanding of the Supreme Lord and the individual soul's relationship with Him, and expounded *dharmaḥ projjhita-kaitavaḥ,* "complete rejection of religious principles that are selfishly motivated."[2] Holding that every word of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* outweighs any other opinion past, present, or future, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī likened all religious processes save that given in *Bhāgavatam* to jars of poison with a little milk floating on top, and composed a distich based on *Bhāgavatam's* rejection of motivated religious practices:[3]

> *pṛthivīte yata kathā dharma nāma cale*
> *bhāgavata kahe tāhā paripūrṇa chale*
>
> *Bhāgavatam* states that whatever in the world is passing as dharma is actually wholesale deception.[*]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura lived for truth, and like a valiant warrior, never hesitated to attack the myriad manifestations of falsity. Personifying the spirit of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* by insisting that the highest truth is reality distinguished from illusion for the welfare of all, he effectively sifted out the real from the unreal, the servant of the real from the servant of the unreal, the Vaiṣṇava from the non-Vaiṣṇava.[†] He never countenanced the slightest deviation from the truth, not even by the most eminent or nearest-and-dearest persons, and would detect, expose, and dissect even the subtlest presence of fallacy in theories and statements that to others appeared entirely plausible. He held that all prevalent so-called truths point only to a limited ideal formulated by subjective projection, and thus are actually untruths and impasses in realizing the truth. He exhorted:

> Do not try to discover the nature of truth by the exercise of your imagination. Do not endeavor to attain the truth through experience of this world. Do not manufacture truth in order to satisfy your erring inclinations, or hastily accept anything for the reason that it satisfies such inclinations. Do not regard as truth anything that has been "built up" or has the support of a majority of people like yourself, nor as untruth anything that is rejected by the overwhelming majority. According to the scriptures there will be found hardly one in a crore of human beings who really worships the truth. What is proclaimed by the united voices of all the people of this world as truth may turn out to be false. Therefore, cease to confront the truth in a challenging mood. The truth is not brought into existence by such arrogance. One has to approach the truth in the spirit of absolute submission. It is necessary to listen to truth. Truth is self-revealing, and only when it is pleased to reveal itself can its actual nature be known to us, and not otherwise.[4]

He explained why broadcasting the truth was rare:

> Everyone is eager for adoration by others, not for the absolute truth. Those who make a show of being preachers do not disturb mankind, but rather maintain everyone's present mentality while busily protecting their own existence. Therefore there is no propagation of the truth, since one's popularity is not served by speaking or hearing the truth.[5]

> Pure items are rare and not easily attainable, and so are not much appreciated. Similarly, there is no respect for those who do not misguide people but are busy trying through *saṅkīrtana* and Hari-*kathā* to turn them toward the Lord. At present it is fashionable to be cheated by those who in the name of dharma misguide people. Real devotees do not speak to satisfy their audiences. They do not cheat people. Rather, pure devotees reveal the defects of cheaters who love to compromise. Only fortunate persons learn to be cautious after hearing the words of saints. Although the words of genuine devotees may appear to contradict our present taste and experience, nonetheless they are most auspicious for us.[6]

Hence a major focus of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's preaching was to expose cheating in all forms, especially in the spheres of philosophy and religious practice. He denounced as hypocritical all varieties of religion practiced without the intention of surrendering to Kṛṣṇa, such as those meant to improve moral, social, or intellectual life, or promote an irenic ambiance conducive to genteel sense gratification in this world, those aimed at enjoying enhanced sensual delights in a future birth, and even those aspiring for spiritual liberation but devoid of devotion to Kṛṣṇa. He presented religion not as a palliative for the pangs of material existence, but as the required alternative to it. He was not interested in becoming famous or respected, in merely creating a good impression, or in becoming a religious icon. He preached to establish Gauḍīya *siddhānta,* to uphold the dignity of the authentic Gauḍīya *sampradāya,* and to convince others of the overwhelming necessity of accepting Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti.*

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura refused to be molded by popular demand into the stereotype sadhu of flowery beatitude passing a halcyon existence and doling out benedictions in exchange for contributions. Nearly all people who approach sadhus seek peace, reassurance, and relief from the bruises of life, expecting blessings for solving their material problems and to facilitate unobstructed sense indulgence. Such individuals do not want or expect a sadhu to force his way into their phantasmagoria and reveal their life to be in need of wholesale reform. But Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was a different grade of sadhu. Like a lotus, which lives in water but remains above it, he moved in human society but was unaffected by it. Even numerous sadhus of his day, most of whom sequestered themselves from the world and its turbulence, could not understand his approach to spiritual life.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī considered that his responsibility as a sadhu was to slash others' misconstructions. Although persons who lead serene lives of study and prayer but do not preach may be regarded as saintly, they cannot be compared to devotees who go out to confront all opposing elements and fight for Kṛṣṇa. And even among preachers, many prefer to adopt a soft line, averting conflict by not disturbing others' false egos. Sadhus were expected to be mild and nonjudgmental, avoiding causing annoyance to others, and promoting concord by recognizing all opinions as equally tenable. But Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī deemed such liberalism another form of deception, a self-serving acceptance born of fear of retribution—in other words, refraining from pointing out others' misdoings lest oneself become subject to assessment. He parodied the hypocrisy inherent in such mutual social acquiescence by saying, *meiṅ bhī cup, tum bhī cup:* "I'll be quiet, you be quiet." [*]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was not for sectarian coexistence, conciliation, or syncretism. His sole means for bridging the abyss between others and himself was to exhort them to come to his side. He spoke against mushy tolerance of nonsensical ideas in the name of ecumenism, which he anyway took as a nebulous and impossible dream, unless people were prepared to forswear miscellaneous rubrics of cheating religion and simply surrender unto Kṛṣṇa. He expostulated against that style of utopian concinnity so cherished by worldly idealists who aimed at attuning all streams of human thought within an inclusive, tolerant, pluralistic, open-minded ethos in defiance of Kṛṣṇa—as capsulized in Ramakrishna's catchy jingle *yata mata tata patha:* "All are approaching the absolute in diverse ways." Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura countered this by stating that those who worship on assorted religious paths cannot possibly serve Bhagavān.[7] He taught that real harmonizing is achievable only by aligning with Kṛṣṇa, whereby everyone's actual self-interest would automatically be fulfilled, and that any other attempts for consentaneity, however seemingly noble, would merely engender further envy, rivalry, and competition, and thus were actually disjunctive and ungodly.[†]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī dubbed as "pseudo-latitudinarianism" the impersonalistic attempt to obfuscate or make light of meaningful differences, such as those between genuine and watered-down dharma, and considered it to be based on what he termed *cit-jaḍa-samanvaya-vāda* (trying to conflate material with spiritual), which he compared with the endeavor to inosculate gold and stone:

> How can *sat* and *asat,* devotee and nondevotee, pious and sinful, literate and illiterate, demigod and Supreme Lord, chaste and unchaste, *dharma* and *adharma,* light and darkness, constitutional and conditional, *bhakti* and *abhakti,* be homologous?
>
> Everything seems alright to those unmindful of the tidings of the internal reality, who cannot enter into its highly subtle understanding. An ignorant boy may claim that his illegible script has meaning because that of an intelligent person has meaning; and one who does not regard scrawl and meaningful writing as equal will be accused of sectarianism or partiality by the foolish. If we appeal to popularists who have no comprehension of Hari, Hari-*kathā,* or *satya-siddhānta,* they will say that to promote genuine *siddhānta* is sectarian and to refute *asat-siddhānta* is blasphemy. They think, "When we know nothing, better to cook the accounts by calling everything equal. In this way everyone will stay satisfied and there will be no mutual bad feelings." But truth and falsehood, devotion and nondevotion, can never be one. Persons devoid of devotional sentiment, who feel no necessity to serve the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who do not want actual benefit, who consider sensual enjoyment and fame desirable, will adjudge contaminated and pure as one.[8]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura never characterized himself as an apologist of a particular religious faith, not even Hinduism, for although in sociological terms Vaiṣṇava dharma could be defined as part of the Hindu gestalt, in its pristine essence it transcended all exoteric attempts at definition. He stood above and apart from all terrestrial religions, which were but partial

reflections of the eternal truth that he alone was delineating:

> We do not subscribe to the way in which Hindus, Muhammedans, Christians, etc., have been endeavoring to set forth their respective contentious views. Neither has the obsolete quarrel between the *śāktas* and the Vaiṣṇavas any bearing on the subject matter of our preaching. Our words will never die as long as time endures, nay, even after time itself has ceased to function. The fact is that once a person becomes really conversant with the message of Śrī Caitanya-deva about the function of spiritual love, all little narrownesses are eliminated once and for all.[9]

When asked if Vaiṣṇava dharma could be acceptable to all, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura replied:

> There is no dharma other than Vaiṣṇava dharma. It is the eternal dharma of all *jīvas*. Whatever else is propagated in the world as dharma is either a step toward or a perversion of Vaiṣṇava dharma. There is no use in being a Christian, Muslim, Hindu, animal, bird, tree, stone, demigod, human, or demon. Let all become Vaiṣṇavas and be situated in their eternal constitutional position. This is what Śrī Mahāprabhu effected when He went to South India, where He loudly chanted the Lord's glories while traveling. His chanting created many Vaiṣṇavas. By His mercy, as He perambulated Jhārikhaṇḍa forest even the birds, animals, trees, and creepers became Vaiṣṇavas. Worshipers of Śiva and Durgā, atheists, Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, impersonalists, materialists, mental speculators, yogis, ascetics, learned, foolish, sick, healthy—all became Vaiṣṇavas. Mahāprabhu's only weapon was the chanting of Kṛṣṇa's holy names. Those who became Vaiṣṇavas in turn made others Vaiṣṇavas, by acting as spiritual masters under Mahāprabhu's order.[10]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī appreciated daring disciples who took risks in preaching and did not hedge or compromise. He referred to conciliators as "good-for-nothings," or in Bengali, *ṣāṅḍer gobar* (bull's dung), a disparaging term meaning "useless person."[*] He cautioned his disciples that "a flatterer can neither be a guru nor a preacher," and told them, "Don't speak to please the *janatā* (people in general), but to please Janārdana (Kṛṣṇa). Declare that those who do not perform Hari-*bhajana* are foolish and butchers of their own souls. The public may not like our message, yet it is incumbent upon us to state the truth. It is our responsibility to strongly refute ideologies opposed to Vaiṣṇava dharma. Our previous *ācāryas* did so to a great degree, and our only duty is to follow in their footsteps."[11] He viewed the disinclination to correct others as being the sign of a cheater, and warned:

> Do not associate with so-called sadhus who by not chastising anyone do not act for others' welfare. By associating with sadhus, the heart should become purified from sinful propensities. The present role of sadhus acting for others' mundane happiness can render no wellbeing whatsoever.[12]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura thus personified Lord Caitanya's statement *'nirapekṣa' nahile 'dharma' nā yāya rakṣaṇe*: "Without being *nirapekṣa* (impartial, aloof from popular opinion, equitable) one cannot protect dharma." (Cc 3.3.23) He explained that *nirapekṣa* means being unaffected

by anything material and remaining steady in the Lord's service.[13] He himself was never swayed by worldly predilections, and by his commitment to speaking only the unbiased truth he firmly protected dharma.

Sarasvatī Ṭhākura spoke of "aggressive grace" and often quoted *paśūnāṁ laguḍo yathā*—that obdurate inane rascals who cannot be persuaded by reasonable arguments deserve physical punishment, as do animals (although he never encouraged his followers to actually administer such chastisement).[14]

Many people deemed Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's aggressive triumphalism alien to the all-accommodating spirit of Hinduism and unbefitting a saintly person. Hence they questioned his authenticity as a sadhu, opining that his bludgeoning was unnecessary and that it was better to appreciate the good in everyone. To objections that his approach was overly negative and that elaboration on *bhakti* as a positive process would be more fitting and effective, the *Harmonist* emphatically responded that negativity is required:

> The positive method by itself is not the most effective method of propaganda in a controversial age like the present. The negative method which seeks to differentiate the truth from non-truth in all its forms, is even better calculated to convey the directly inconceivable significance of the absolute. It is a necessity which cannot be conscientiously avoided by the dedicated preacher of the truth if he wants to be a loyal servant of Godhead. The method is sure to create an atmosphere of controversy in which it is quite easy to lose one's balance of judgment. But the ways of the deluding energy are so intricate that unless their mischievous nature is fully exposed, it is not possible for the soul in the conditioned state to avoid the snares spread by the enchantress for encompassing the ruin of her only too willing victims.[*] It is a duty which shall be sacred to all who have been enabled to attain even a distant glimpse of the Absolute.[15†]

In numerous speeches and articles, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī insisted that an actual sadhu must speak strongly:

> The only duty of sadhus is to cut away all the accumulated wicked propensities of every individual. This alone is the causeless natural desire of all sadhus. Worldly persons possess a double nature; they express one kind of sentiment but internally cherish a different purpose. Moreover, they want to advertise this duplicity as a mark of liberalism, or love of harmony. Those who are unwilling to show any duplicity, who desire to be frank and straightforward, or in other words, to exercise unambiguously the function of the soul—such really sincere individuals are called "sectarian" and "orthodox" by those who practice duplicity. We will cultivate the association only of those who are straightforward, and avoid the company of others. By all means we must avoid bad company. We are advised to keep a distance of one hundred cubits from animals of the horned species, and should observe the same caution in regard to all insincere persons.[16]
>
> Without doubt, a sadhu's words possess power to destroy the evil propensities of one's

mind. In this way sadhus benefit everyone who associates with them. There are many things which we do not disclose to the sadhu. The real sadhu makes us speak out what we keep concealed in our hearts. He then applies the knife. The very word *sadhu* has no other meaning than this. He stands in front of the block with the uplifted sacrificial knife in his hand. The sensuous desires of men are like goats. The sadhu stands there to kill those desires by the merciful stroke of the keen edge of the sacrificial knife in the form of unpleasant language. If the sadhu turns into my flatterer, then he does me harm; he becomes my enemy. If he flatters us, we will be led to the road which brings worldly enjoyment but no factual well-being.[17]

He is a sadhu by contact with whom the weapon of his words can cause one to give up all mischievous behavior, all attachments to the non-absolute, and all imagined conceptions.[18]

The aggressive pronouncement of the concrete truth is the crying necessity of the moment, for silencing the aggressive propaganda of specific untruths that is being spread all over the world.[19]

Without cheating anyone, we should boldly proclaim the truth to everyone. Even if the truth is unpopular, if it bestows genuine auspiciousness on the living entities we must speak it. Unless we fearlessly speak the truth, Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga will not be pleased. The more determined one is in devotional service, the bolder and more courageous he will be as a preacher.[20]

If I were to desist from speaking the impartial truth for fear that some listeners might be riled, I would be deviating from the path of Vedic truth to accept that of untruth. I would become inimical to the Vedas, an atheist, and would no longer possess faith in Bhagavān, the very embodiment of truth.[21*]

He maintained that the Vaiṣṇavas' aggression is required to counter enemies of truth:

The loyal servant of the Absolute Truth is required to be the active opponent of all violent enemies of the truth. It is his imperative duty to protest against the violence of nontheists in uncompromising terms and take all consequence of such protest. He is to give up his own life if he is not in a position to oppose the enemy of Viṣṇu in an effective manner and cannot also avoid their society. And if he possesses the power it is his imperative duty to use it against violence. One who does not perform these imperative duties commits a grave offense against the truth.

The theist is by no means enjoined by the scriptures to be a nonviolent passive spectator of the violent acts of aggressive nontheists against Visnu and His devotees. This is not the meaning of the teaching of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya by which the devotee is required to be humbler than a blade of grass and more tolerant than the tree. These qualities are to be exercised in upholding, and not for deserting the cause of the truth.[22]

After his first major victory at Bālighāi, Siddhānta Sarasvatī had been encouraged and blessed by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura with the potency to go on speaking in that unrestrained manner:

> You will be undefeated everywhere in presenting Vaiṣṇava *siddhānta.* If in propagating the straightforward unbiased truth the entire anti-devotional misguided self-interested community unites to attack you, still no one will be able to muzzle your fearless voice. Never desist from preaching the truth.[23]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was more concerned with preciseness than politeness. He spoke what people needed to hear, rather than to nourish their perverted desires, and never employed euphemisms or other devices that might have softened his message and made it more palatable. He explained:

> A chanter of Hari-*kīrtana* is necessarily the uncompromising enemy of worldliness and hypocrisy. It is his constant function to dispel all misconceptions by preaching the truth in its most unambiguous form, without any consideration of person, place, or time. The form to be adopted is that which is least likely to be misunderstood. It is his bounden duty to clearly and frankly oppose any person who tries to deceive and harm himself and others by misrepresenting the truth, whether due to malice or genuine misunderstanding. This will be possible if the chanter of *kīrtana* is always prepared to submit to being trodden upon by thoughtless people, if such discomfort will enable him to benefit his persecutors by chanting of the truth in the most unambiguous manner. If he is unwilling or afraid of considerations of self-respect or personal discomfort to chant *kīrtana* under all circumstances, he is unfit to be a preacher of the absolute truth. Humility implies perfect submission to the truth and no sympathy for untruth. Those who entertain any partiality for untruth are unfit to chant Hari-*kīrtana*. Any clinging to untruth is opposed to the principle of humility born of absolute submission to the truth.
>
> Those who perpetually serve the truth with all their faculties, and who have no hankering for the trivialities of this world, are necessarily always free from malice born of competing worldliness. Thus they are fit to admonish those who are actively engaged in harming themselves and others by opposing or misrepresenting the truth for attaining rewards in the shape of a perpetuation of the state of misery and ignorance. The method employed by the servant of the good preceptor for preventing such misrepresentation of the truth is a part and parcel of the truth itself. It may not always be pleasing to the diseased susceptibilities of deluded minds, and may even be denounced by them as a malicious act with which they are only too familiar. But truthful words from the lips of a loyal and humble servant of Hari possess such beneficent power, that all effort to suppress or obstruct those words serves merely to vindicate to impartial minds the necessity of complete submission to the absolute truth as the only cure of the disease of worldliness. Humility employed in unambiguous service to the absolute truth is necessarily and qualitatively different from its perverted prototype, practiced by cunning people for worldly gain. The professors of pseudo-humility have reason to fear the preaching of Hari's servant, one of whose duties is

> to expose the enormous possibility of mischief inherent in various forms of so-called spiritual conduct when they are prostituted for serving the untruth.[24]

As His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda later wrote:

> No compromise—Ramakrishna, avatars, yogis, everyone was enemy to Guru-mahārāja. He never compromised. Some godbrothers complained that this preaching was a chopping technique and it would not be successful. But we have seen that those who criticized fell down.[25]

Such a contentious stand was certainly at odds with the ecumenic current of the world and could not be substantiated merely by polite speeches. The extent of prevalent religious distortion necessitated a fittingly forceful response. Thus Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī displayed no qualms about transgressing hallowed social norms by openly criticizing venerated religious leaders, and remained unruffled at being deemed profane by those concerned more with a sham of refined manners than with truth. His disciples, who had to bear the backlash provoked by his unabashed outspokenness, were forced to comprehend his position and articulately defend it from repeated upbraidings by indignant persons who demanded to know why Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī spoke so demeaningly. His assertiveness, urging whomever he met to immediately accept *śuddha-bhakti* as the sole purpose in life, left no scope for opponents to vacillate, and polarized Vaiṣṇava society in Bengal into ardent supporters ready to do anything to assist him, and conscienceless enemies prepared to do anything to squelch him. He was quite aware that, despite its pretense of respectability, the powerful standpatter orthodoxy that he defied had nothing to gain but everything to lose from his endeavors, which it thus vehemently resisted.

Accordingly, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had temple doors closed on him in Vṛndāvana, stones hurled at him in Navadvīpa, and had to face constant vindictiveness and confrontation, including even bids on his life. But despite taking all risks and provoking enmity, he remained unshakably confident and never wavered in his resolve, knowing that he could not be defeated, for his message had been received from the infallible source of *sādhu-śāstra-guru.* He fully depended on Kṛṣṇa's protection, trusting that as their surrendered representative, all the *paramparā-ācāryas* and Kṛṣṇa Himself were directly behind him, as had been revealed in the divine vision at Vrajapattana. With this conviction he was determined to execute their mission even by imperiling his life. He seemed to gain enthusiasm in proportion to the ferocity of opposition, and considered such resistance indicative that his efforts were taking effect. In a 1930 lecture he stated:

> Previously only foolish groups, not understanding the Gauḍīya Maṭha teachings, in various tricky ways used to oppugn, imitate, and compete with us or just make monkey faces at us. But now it is clear that even bodies much esteemed by the educated community are also trying to attack our institution of spotless spiritual instruction. This is a very good sign. If this is happening in the beginning of our preaching activities, what could be more auspicious? Just as in homeopathic treatment if initially the aggravation

> increases and the thermometer rises, that means the medicine is having effect. Let us hope that next year we will get one hundred times more obstructions to our broadcasting of truth, one hundred times more strength to overcome such obstacles, and ten million times more enthusiasm for service. We also wish auspiciousness to those who oppose us.[26]

In accord with his wishing auspiciousness to opponents, and lest his followers imbibe his trenchant style sans the deep compassion from which it was born, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura revealed to them his inner feelings: "Let me not desire anything but the highest good for my worst foes." And factually, despite his fighting approach he bore no malice toward anyone. It was not his intention to become anyone's enemy, for he was the genuine well-wisher of all. But as a propagator of the ultimate truth, which alone could bestow actual beatitude upon all, he was obliged to point out discrepancies in whoever contested his propagating that truth. As he explained, "If people would happily accept the truth, there would be no need to reprove them." His chastisement was in the spirit of *vasudhaiva-kuṭumbakam* (seeing everyone in the world as dear), for he cared so deeply for all that he could not bear to see others misled or misleading.[*] He spoke caustically only to benefit persons whose perverse attitudes could not otherwise be altered, and to protect the sincere from being cheated. He clarified that although his approach might seem pugnacious, he was compelled to speak thus to *avoid* harming others, for the worst type of violence is to refrain from delivering Hari-*kathā.* He explained that *jīva-hiṁsā* (violence to or envy of *jīvas*) included not only the conventional definition of killing, disturbing, or causing trouble to all categories of *jīva,* but more importantly consisted of apathy or miserliness toward preaching *śuddha-bhakti,* or in encouraging Māyāvādīs, *karmīs,* or *anyābhilāṣīs* or speaking in a manner sympathetic to and accomodating of their outlook.[27] Hence he exhorted his listeners to patiently hear his message, notwithstanding any discomfort experienced in so doing:

> Let us cast off the challenging temper, submissively offer our ear, and hear what the messenger says. We will clear up doubts by interrogatories. The messenger should not be regarded as our flatterer. He will speak in the most insolent way. By bitter words he will undeceive us. If we have any hankering for the truth, we should submit and hear. The first duty of the messenger of the absolute is to cut off our wrong impressions, to change our taste. It is an unpalatable duty. But we shall make progress by his regulation. You should be prepared for bitter words for the undoing of whatever you have learnt.[28]

In Vṛndāvana in 1932, a certain gentleman posited to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, "You have numerous respectable and educated followers and many first-class properties, and thus have acquired facilities to work with. I have not. So before speaking the truth I will have to gain much more momentum." Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura responded, "Unless one is fixed in the truth, he cannot fearlessly present the truth." [29]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī advised his disciples to see the opposition they were sure to face as being God's arrangement, and to develop the tolerance essential for preachers of Hari-*kathā:*

When Bhagavān is merciful to me, He arranges unlimited persons to speak sour words in uncountable ways, simply to teach me tolerance. One who cannot learn to tolerate the cavils of the world is ineligible to chant *harināma.*[30]

He exhorted his disciples to follow the example of Śrī Rādhā in not giving up service to Kṛṣṇa despite inviting public scorn by such adamancy. And he put in perspective the difficulty and thanklessness of his task:

Millions of materially motivated speakers will go to hell, but someday someone will realize the independent truth spoken forthrightly and be saved. It may take hundreds of lives or millions of years before someone will be able to comprehend this confidential reality. It is not possible to make even one individual do so without spending hundreds of gallons of blood.[31]

We tell everyone, "You understand little." Thus we have gained numerous enemies and friends. When one contradicts those conceptions opposed to *bhakti*—namely *karma, jñāna,* and *anyābhilāṣa*—and establishes *bhakti-siddhānta,* it becomes necessary to buck the current thoughts of the world concerned with the body and mind. As the saying goes, "A dumb person has no enemies." If one simply sits in one's house silently, thinking of one's own welfare, there will certainly be nothing of import to tell the world. But we cannot tolerate that people who have achieved the rare human birth, a birth suitable for worshiping the Lord, simply tread the path of misfortune, of non-devotion. We are obliged to repeatedly call others to topics of devotion.

I will die soon, after which no one will come to prevent you from your enjoyment; at that time you will be able to enjoy to your heart's content. In rejecting sense indulgence and instead talking of satisfying Kṛṣṇa's senses, I have become a source of disgruntlement for many. They have not missed a chance to attempt to kill me. Some of them think, "He scuttled our court case"; others opine, "Our position has become diminished." One cannot help becoming the butt of dislike for people absorbed in greed, egoism, prestige, and duplicity. If Kṛṣṇa protects a person, no one can do anything to him. May the actual truth prevail.[32]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura perfectly manifested the mood of Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja, the archetypal preacher, who had said:

naivodvije para duratyaya-vaitaraṇyās
tvad-vīrya-gāyana-mahāmṛta-magna-cittaḥ
śoce tato vimukha-cetasa indriyārtha-
māyā-sukhāya bharam udvahato vimūḍhān

O best of great personalities, I am not at all afraid of material existence, for wherever I stay I am fully absorbed in thoughts of Your glories and activities. My only anxiety is for the fools and rascals who are making elaborate plans for mundane happiness and maintaining

their families, societies, and countries. I am simply concerned with love for them.

prāyeṇa deva munayaḥ sva-vimukti-kāmā
maunaṁ caranti vijane na parārtha-niṣṭhāḥ
naitān vihāya kṛpaṇān vimumukṣa eko
nānyaṁ tvad asya śaraṇaṁ bhramato 'nupaśye

Most saintly persons, desiring their own deliverance, go to the hills or forest to meditate with vows of silence. They are not interested in delivering others. But I do not wish to be liberated alone, leaving aside all these poor fools and rascals. I know that without Kṛṣṇa consciousness, without taking shelter at Your lotus feet, one cannot be happy. Therefore I wish to bring them back to the shelter of Your lotus feet. (SB 7.9.43–44)

To Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's disciples several individuals proffered what they considered well-intentioned suggestions for improving his performance: "If he would just be a little more sensitive to public opinion and more positive in his outlook, if he would look for the good in others and not grouse so much, and not be so insistent on always speaking the straight facts, then surely today no other religious leader would have as many supporters as he"; "If he did not forbid all kinds of intoxicants, then right now thousands would surrender to him"; "He could have been tremendously successful by adjusting to *smārta* practices and not introducing new ideas about brahminism"; "If he had at least orally endorsed groups that he instead chose to berate, the gurus thereof and their unlimited followers would have submitted to him as their universal head."

Another common tactic of opponents unable to digest the raw truth presented by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was to take exception with his mode of delivery, thus dodging discussion of his actual message. But Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was not to be inveigled by the apparent pragmatism of such self-serving cant. He knew that while among themselves such persons proclaimed loathing for everything he stood for, they feared to voice their opinions in the presence of even his junior disciples, lest they be philosophically demolished and exposed as the scapegraces they were. So rather than reconcile with those whose real intent was to continue with undisturbed sense enjoyment, he went on speaking the truth in a manner virtually guaranteed to invoke enmity, thus inviting upon himself untold troubles and inconveniences.

Often as soon as he nullified one argument, his opponents would fabricate another, calling on seemingly unending reserves of warped imaginative intelligence for weaving convoluted theories. Yet as a committed soldier, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was not only bold but also unyielding. Remaining firm and equipoised on the battlefield, he shattered with the weapons of *śāstrīya* knowledge, insight, and conviction the barrage of verbal missiles ever fired at him.

Despite the Gauḍīya Maṭha's multipronged, ingenious, sedulous, and widely acclaimed preaching campaign, relatively few were serious enough to wholeheartedly accept its teachings and the genuine devotional path:

> The Gauḍīya Maṭha has been advertising its aims and objects and its methods in the most unambiguous manner, viz., by the words and deeds of all the inmates of its numerous branches and its wandering preachers. But in spite of its vigorous propagandist endeavors, the general public is hardly correctly informed of its character. The unique nature of its purpose and method has necessarily raised up a numerous body of opponents who believe in intellectual and humanitarian activities. It has been vehemently condemned by the orthodox sections of the Hindus. It has been supposed to be dogmatic, reactionary, and uncultured. The intellectual sections have kept aloof from it in sheer despair and in almost open contempt. The average so-called religious person feels scandalized by the open deprecation of all good work. Everybody is persuaded that an institution which goes against the opinion of the generality of mankind is automatically proved to be wrong and absurd. It is this inert self-complacency that has perverted most persons from lending their serious attention to the preachers of the *maṭha.* They have seemed to hear its message only out of their condescending courtesy. They have not listened to the message as to a matter of immediate practical importance. They have not felt the necessity of lending their really serious attention.[33]

Yet Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura exhorted his followers not to be discouraged:

> The truth is always the truth, the genuine always genuine. Ordinary people may or may not accept it, but it never loses its glory or respectable position. Maybe it will happen that within many eons only one sincere truth-seeking person will appreciate the genuineness of the Gauḍīya Maṭha. Yet such a person could effect auspiciousness for unlimited millions of people.[34]

And those who did allow *bhaktisiddhānta-vāṇī* to enter their heart, surrendering their life for its propagation, became so charged with transcendental energy that each man performed the work of many. Thus the voice of the Gauḍīya Maṭha was heard far and wide, making a significant and lasting impression on the cultural, religious, and philosophical life of Bengal and beyond. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī untiringly strove to transmit *śuddha-bhakti* to as many as possible, yet his aim was not so much to collect numerous followers as to find but a single sincere person. He would often declare, "Even at the expense of all these properties, temples, and Maṭhas, if I could assist even one soul in becoming a pure devotee, my mission would be fulfilled."

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī avowed that even if the whole world were against him, or if not a single individual were to stay with him, or if those who had made a pretense of surrendering to him were to leave, still, under the protection of his *gurudeva's* lotus feet, he would fearlessly and unceasingly preach the unadulterated truth until the last moment he remained in this world; and if some day that truth were to enter the ear of even one fortunate soul, then through that lone person the entire universe would attain the topmost benefit.[35] Citing the stanza *koṭi-mukta-madhye 'durlabha' eka kṛṣṇa-bhakta*—"Even among millions of liberated persons even one devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa is rare" (Cc 2.19.148)—he commented, "Considering that liberated

persons are very rare, then what to speak of authentic Vaiṣṇavas? So, if as a result of our activities five pure devotees were to emerge from among the fifty million people of Bengal, we could deem that an unexpectedly great success." When asked disparagingly "How many people know of Vaiṣṇava dharma?" Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī responded, "How many postgraduates are being turned out? How many Newtons have there been? Is it a wise principle to give up the culture of science because there are not many Professor J.C. Boses?" [36]

A headmaster once petitioned Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, "You are speaking of very high matters, but we are now in a nightmarish state. Giving up fish and flesh is too hard for us. We are conditioned souls. Please give us an easy process." Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura replied, "You are fallen in the well. I should not go down; you should come up to me. Don't try to pull me down; stretch out your hand and I will pull you up. Don't try to make it too easy. We cannot give up our essential practices and allow eating of fish and flesh." Such words indicated the implicit tenor of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's message and mission: to set exemplary standards and uplift others so that they could derive actual benefit, not to become coopted by humdrum religiosity of no real value for anyone.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī never blenched at pointing out deviations from *śāstra* and *siddhānta*. During the Gauḍa-maṇḍala Parikramā in 1925, while visiting the birthplace of Īśvara Purī in Kumārahaṭṭa, in a speech to his accompanying disciples he specified the discrepancies within the temple there. The deity form of Īśvara Purī depicted him as an old man dressed in the white cloth of a *gṛhastha*. Before him was a deity of Nimāi Paṇḍita in a pose beseeching his mercy. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī explained that at the time of awarding initiation to Śrī Caitanya, Īśvara Purī was a sannyasi, and since he had not remained long in this world it was inaccurate to portray him as aged. Besides, although Īśvara Purī had formally initiated Nimāi Paṇḍita, actually his mood was ever that of a servant to Caitanya Mahāprabhu, so to represent him as if the Lord's master was certainly against the intent of *śāstra*. Moreover, the imaginative writings inscribed in the temple, and that the *pūjā* was conducted with bael leaves and red hibiscuses (standard offerings to Lord Śiva) further indicated the worshipers' ignorance.

Aggressive as he was toward all forms of hypocrisy, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura sometimes recommended a tactful approach, such as suggesting gradual treatment of persons afflicted with the malaise of material life by dispensing "homeopathic doses in sugar-coated pills," and that better than directly naming popular bogus missions or individuals was to expose the defects in their teachings and thus defeat them indirectly. To immediately identify rascals as such would cause others who were sentimentally attached to them to take umbrage and be unable to hear the intended message. Attacking on a personal level would unnecessarily engender acrimonious vendettas, thus dragging matters to a petty level and thereby sidelining philosophical understanding. Thus Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura sometimes advised his disciples, "Don't say 'cow,' but rather 'an animal with four legs, a tail, and two horns that gives milk.'"

But in the company of his followers, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī unreservedly fulminated

against charlatans and cheaters and the missions built around them. Bengalis were proud of their various celebrities in science, politics, philosophy, and religion; yet on the strength of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī dismissed them all as fools.[*] And often the publications of the Gauḍīya Maṭha named and openly criticized certain celebrities. For instance, the September 1929 *Harmonist* targeted both maverick philosopher J. Krishnamurti and Nobel Prize winner Rabindranath Tagore, the most famous and revered poet of Bengal, for their vague speculative approachs to spiritual life—the former outright discarding and the latter politely dodging *śrauta-panthā*.[37]

Yet Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī did not simply criticize or call ill names, or lash out whimsically or boorishly, or over trivial matters. He condemned the attacking of others with a "dissuading policy" as being the approach not of a *pracāraka* (preacher) but a *pratāraka* (cheater).[38] He explained on the basis of *śāstra* and philosophy why whatever he was criticizing was certainly criticizable, and should—must—be criticized. His systematic *śāstrīya* presentation of the absolute truth was clearly far above both mere dogmatic censure and the slushy emotionalism associated with Bengali Vaiṣṇavism, and attracted many thoughtful followers, whom he expected to assimilate on the strength of reasoned conviction the asceticism, dedication, and unbreachable preaching spirit inherent to himself.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura never considered that he had accomplished enough and was entitled to retire comfortably. Having declared unmitigating war on *māyā,* he established the paragon of a genuine preacher by fighting up to his last breath. Yet even while battling for Kṛṣṇa, he ever remained a saint and gentleman. As a perfect Vaiṣṇava, even in opposing others he retained intrinsic respect for them and always spoke on principles, never descending to the platform of personal feuding. Thus, many who were initially startled by his forceful speaking were gradually won over by the cogency of his teachings, his sincere concern for others as manifested in his unflinching adherence to truth, and his other extraordinary godly qualities.

The exemplar of yukta-vairāgya

Three

Yukta-vairāgya

> An *ācārya* who comes for the service of the Lord cannot be expected to conform to a stereotype, for he must find the ways and means by which Kṛṣṇa consciousness may be spread.[1]

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī had distinguished *yukta-vairāgya* (balanced, discriminative renunciation in service to Kṛṣṇa) from *phalgu-vairāgya,* its feeble counterpart:

> *anāsaktasya viṣayān yathārham upayuñjataḥ*
> *nirbandhaḥ kṛṣṇa-sambandhe yuktaṁ vairāgyam ucyate*
>
> Not being attached to anything yet properly using everything in relation to Kṛṣṇa is *yukta-vairāgya,* renunciation suitable for *bhakti.*
>
> *prāpañcikatayā buddhyā hari-sambandhi-vastunaḥ*
> *mumukṣubhiḥ parityāgo vairāgyaṁ phalgu kathyate*
>
> Renunciation, by persons desiring liberation, of items related to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, considering them material, is called *phalgu* (insignificant and worthless). (Brs 1.2.255–56)

In his writings, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had repeatedly stressed the importance of understanding and implementing *yukta-vairāgya* in progressive Hari-*bhakti.* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī demonstrated this principle in an unprecedented manner, particularly in showing how the topmost level of spiritual consciousness is developed not by dissociating oneself from the world, but by using everything in it to preach *śuddha-bhakti.* Traditionally, renounced Vaiṣṇavas had avoided thickly populated places, preferring to remain in secluded holy spots, especially Vṛndāvana and Navadvīpa, following the austere example of the Six Gosvāmīs who slept under a different tree every night. But Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's aim was to preach worldwide, for which *yukta-vairāgya* was the key. Thus, while uncompromising in principles, he was versatile in practice.

He composed two Bengali verses describing *yukta-* and *phalgu-vairāgya* and featured them alongside Śrī Rūpa's originals on the header of each *Gauḍīya:*

> *āsakti-rahita sambandha sahita*
> *viṣaya-samūha sakali mādhava*
>
> All sense objects which are used without personal attachment and in relation to Kṛṣṇa are nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa.[2]

śrī-hari sevāya yāhā anukūla
viṣaya baliyā tyāge haya bhūla

It is a mistake to reject anything suitable for serving Kṛṣṇa, considering it an object of sense gratification.

He reasoned, "If everything is the Supreme Lord's energy then why should anything be rejected? If God is good, then His energy also is good. Will not the master of unlimited universes accord some of His estate for the use of His servants? His genuine servants are they who understand that temporal items should not be used for sense enjoyment, but can and should be used solely for His service."

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura desired to engage the entire world in Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement. But to effect that, the attention and respect of Westerners and the Western-minded would have to be won, for it was they who were shaping the world. Even in India, the Western secular paradigm was rapidly transforming attitudes toward life. Indian civilization had always been amenable to sadhus, who, quite distinct from the rich and debonair, had deliberately lived simply and humbly, not coveting respect. But no longer was voluntary poverty widely esteemed, and modernistic sophisticates lumped in authentic saints with those beggars who posed as renunciants for the sake of eking out a living. Among the Bengali social elite, Vaiṣṇavas in particular were now shunned as a motley of rejects, illiterates, and lechers.

Considering that for the worldly-minded to be benefited they would first have to respect him and his representatives, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura donned elegant livery, rode in motor vehicles, lived in well-appointed apartments with ornate Western-style furniture, invited socialites to hear Hari-*kathā* in gorgeously built temples, met with kings, and invited governors and other highranking officials of the British Raj to preside over Gauḍīya Maṭha functions—all simply to gain the confidence of materialistic persons, to get them to give a hearing to and acknowledge his message: everything of this world is meaningless if conceived of without relationship to Kṛṣṇa. He explained:

Many make a drama of chanting three lakh names, yet merely a show of chanting without disturbing others will not benefit anyone, except perhaps oneself. Therefore we are preaching by approaching the people of the world dressed even somewhat better than they, showing knowledge even somewhat greater than theirs, being even somewhat more stylish than they—without which they would think us worthless and not listen to our Hari-*kathā*.[3]

I have to go to various places for propagating Hari-*kathā,* so I must present myself as a learned and decent gentleman; otherwise nondevotees will not give me their time.[4]

Bhakti is not a blind process. To whatever frontiers of intelligence ordinary men can lift themselves, devotees must go further.[5]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura trusted that even if initially the admiration of worldlings was gained for the wrong reasons, if they heard from and observed how devotees lived in opulence but without attachment to it, for a sublime rather than sensual purpose, then gradually their esteem could develop into true spiritual appreciation. And although seeking respect was wholly against the principles of Lord Caitanya, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura clarified that a devotee could accept honor not for personal aggrandizement, but for offering to Kṛṣṇa and for creating reverence to Him in individuals otherwise wholly disinclined toward that. He declared, "We can live among millions of rupees and bedecked in costly vesture if our intention is to serve Bhagavān. There is no difficulty on the path of devotional service. Devotees reject the pleasures of worldly enjoyers as being like excretion and urine." [6]

He compared *yukta-vairāgya* to the pragmatism of a serpent:

> A snake does not build its own residence, but lives in a suitable place constructed by other creatures and thus spares itself the labor of constructing a house. Similarly, materialistic persons have taken unlimited pains to produce electric lights, conveyances, mechanical fans, etc., and will continue in the future with such endeavors, which are useful for Vaiṣṇavas. Being dedicated to the spiritual path, Vaiṣṇavas do not think it necessary to strive for material comforts, and are always absorbed in accepting the spiritual essence of everything. They do not consider the inconveniences of ancient times to be conducive for spiritual life, neither are they attached to living in opulent mansions constructed by others. Attainment of one's ultimate goal through activities of the sensate world, such as excessive remembrance and restoration of ancient things, is not specified for the real spiritualist.[7]

Upon embracing the renounced order of life, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī seemingly renounced his extremely austere lifestyle to in many ways adopt that of a worldly gentleman. Yet there was no decrease in his spirit of selfless surrendered service to Kṛṣṇa, which was the quiddity of his existence and of all that he preached. Rather, his apparently more comfortable mode of life demonstrated that he was not attached to abnegation for its own sake, but was ready to live in whatever manner best facilitated his own Hari-*sevā* and that of others. This was according to Lord Caitanya's principle of *kṛṣṇa-prītye bhoga-tyāga*—acceptance or renunciation of items or activities based on Kṛṣṇa's satisfaction.[8] But critics only saw that the Gauḍīya Maṭha possessed appurtenances associated with worldly enjoyment, and deeming them inappropriate for sadhus, failed to recognize the spirit of selfless dedication in which they were utilized. Not considering the tremendous service being rendered through those facilities, detractors surmised that the Gauḍīya Maṭha devotees were dandies in the guise of sadhus.

Yet the presumption that opulence was meant only for worldly enjoyment, and the inability to comprehend that a genuine devotee could live in luxury solely to utilize it for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure, without even a speck of desire for selfish indulgence, revealed the critics' mindset as inferior and perverted. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura detected that those who opposed devotees' utilizing such amenities did so because they considered everything in existence as meant for their own sensual exploitation.[9] He noted:

Atheists want the devotees to live in the forest while they stay at home and enjoy life. Many people ask, "Why is the Gauḍīya Maṭha temple so big?" They think, "Rather, we should have a bigger brothel. We can drive cars, but devotees have no need for cars for serving Kṛṣṇa." [10]

To the common challenge, "What kind of sadhus are you, with all these nice raiments, conveyances, horses, and elephants?" Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and his men would reply, "The best things in the world should be employed in Kṛṣṇa's service, no one else's—which means that they should be used exclusively by sadhus, for only sadhus use everything for Kṛṣṇa."

Although pragmatic, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was never a slave of pragmatism. He was the exemplar of *yukta-vairāgya*—non-imitative realistic renunciation of the world by persons with yet some work to do within it. Despite living amid plenty, he had no personal interest in comfort or finery and always remained abstemious and disinclined to sense indulgence. Thus he established that a devotee who desires not even a paisa for his own sensual indulgence could for service to Kṛṣṇa spend crores of rupees and live in opulence. He explained how it was possible for devotees to accept all facilities yet be totally renounced, and is far superior to slothful quiescent living in the name of *nirjana-bhajana:*

I understand that a certain devotee has decided to construct a thatched cottage for the sake of improving his *sādhana,* thus placing obstacles to the propagation of Hari-*kīrtana* in Madras. Even if he continues with such activities of sense enjoyment for many lifetimes, Hari-*kīrtana* will simply go on without cessation. But it is improper that anyone's inclination to serve the Lord and His devotees be attenuated, even up to the last breath. I am not in favor of building a thatched cottage within the city as a residence for sannyasis. For that purpose a Himālayan cave would be better, or one could do *bhajana* by becoming a tree like Yamalārjuna. Hari-*kīrtana* is the only necessity in this valuable human life. It is not required to place stumbling blocks to preaching by citing *nirjana-bhajana* as an excuse for inactive life, or accepting meaningless poverty on the plea of renunciation. Rather than residing in a cottage with the intention of hidden sense enjoyment, thus preparing for stationary existence [plant life] birth after birth, better to immediately begin performing every endeavor for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure. One can attain Hari-*bhajana* and the mercy of Mahāprabhu by attempting to reveal and preach the glories of guru and Gaurāṅga while internally cultivating the *vairāgya* described in *Prārthanā* and *Prema-bhakti-candrikā,* and by mentally accepting therefrom such utterances as:

ṣaḍ-rasa-bhojana dūre parihari
kabe vraje māgiyā khāiba madhukarī

When will I completely renounce the six varieties of sapor and live in Vraja by begging food?[11]

With this attitude it is possible to ride dressed as a sannyasi through North Gopalapuram in

the limousine of the Àadras Gauḍīya Maṭha without being a pretender or hypocrite.* There is no need to follow the example of a certain person of Kuliyā who falsely dresses as a *bābājī* and makes a show of renunciation while engaging in sybaritism. Renunciation is a matter of the heart. There is a vast difference between those who misuse the trappings of renunciation and they who follow in the footsteps of Janaka Mahārāja or Rāmānanda Rāya. But internal renunciation, or *yukta-vairāgya,* does not mean becoming a Rāvaṇa while externally imitating Janaka Mahārāja or Rāmānanda Rāya, or misusing their example. You may make an artificial show of renunciation in this way, but never expect it to produce any positive results.[12]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's two major gurus had spoken the same truths. But Śrīla Gaura Kiśora Bābājī Mahārāja's teachings had not been taken seriously, his rigid stance having been discounted by almost all hearers as a transcendental idiosyncrasy. And although Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's preaching had made considerable impact in Bengal, it had also been largely neglected even by many who verbally admired it. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was determined that his own directive not be disregarded, and hence by combining spiritual integrity with material competence and sophistication he presented himself and his mission in a manner that could not but command respect both from worldly and spiritually-minded persons.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī practiced *yukta-vairāgya* by doing whatever was necessary for serving Kṛṣṇa, especially by using a show of opulence to attract the public to *śuddha-bhakti.* He explained that destitution in and of itself could neither satisfy Kṛṣṇa nor fulfil His mission. At an assemblage of his disciples in Māyāpur prior to dispatching them to different parts of India, he instructed them to travel by car or horse and to stay in capacious buildings: "Don't scrimp or go in a poor or lowly manner. Keep a high standard. Spend for preaching and make an impression."[13] He wanted his representatives to keep visiting cards and that their clothes be neat, clean, and presentable, not shabby and unkempt like those typical of many sadhus.[14] As (in his typical complex style) he advised his preachers in London, "The esoteric representation need not be placed on the table at the sacrifice of the exoteric code and exposition, as the people are found to be very hasty to judge a person by his external appearance."[15] Another concession for the modern world, and point to criticize for ritual purists, was the Gauḍīya Maṭha devotees' wearing of overcoats and tailored shirts, notwithstanding *śāstrīya* prohibitions against sewn cloth due to its being considered impure.

The Gauḍīya Maṭha owned four cars, which were stationed in Calcutta and Māyāpur and used by devotees most ept in collection, by sannyasis for larger preaching programs, and for personal service to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. The Maṭha also had a horse and buggy, an elephant, and a camel. The camel was purchased after Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī saw one in Patna and said that such a creature should be engaged in Mahāprabhu's service. During festivals and *parikramās* of the holy *dhāmas,* decorated horses and elephants added to the pomp. The Gauḍīya Maṭha horses were so strong and sleek that in Bāg-bazar it was rumored that they were fed *mālpuyā.* After opening the showcase temple on the bank of the Gaṅgā in Calcutta, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would treat prominent people to excursions on the Gaṅga in

one of the Gauḍīya Maṭha's launches, and in that pleasant environment would expound Hari-*kathā* to them.

When the governor of Bengal, Sir John Anderson, visited Māyāpur, arrangements for receiving him and his gubernatorial party were made by a Calcutta hotel, which on Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's order supplied meat and other items according to British taste. When Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī suggested a similar approach for foreign preaching, Śrīmad B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja protested that it would invite criticism. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī replied, "I decided all these things thousands of births ago. We have to do anything and everything for serving Mahāprabhu." On another occasion he had cigarettes provided for a visiting German scholar.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was sometimes criticized as overstepping Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's proscription of *mahārambha* (ventures requiring intense endeavor, like establishing a costly temple).[16] While explaining to his disciples the section of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* wherein this injunction lay, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura justified his position: "It is a question of personal ability. One man might manage an empire and still find time for leisure, whereas another, despite laboring without respite, can barely maintain his family." In other words, whether an undertaking is considered great or small depends on the capacity of the individual.

Whereas traditional sadhus shunned modern mechanized contrivances as being the perquisites of *māyā,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī displayed a higher understanding, seeing in them an opportunity to spread the message of Lord Caitanya in an unprecedented manner. Expertly employing products of *māyā* in Kṛṣṇa's service, he utilized printing presses, trains, cars, and other technological marvels. Despite the radio being anathema to old-school sadhus, in June 1935 Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda Prabhu first put Hari-*kathā* on the airwaves from the only radio station in India, in Calcutta, and later transmitted information regarding the festivals Janmāṣṭamī, Nandotsava, Rādhāṣṭamī, and the *āvirbhāva-mahotsava* of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.[17] Once, prior to an aired lecture, some of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's disciples broadcast *kīrtana* accompanied by traditional instruments and a piano. Magic Lanterns (crude slide shows) were another modern innovation that were a big attraction.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura upheld *yukta-vairāgya* as not merely an expedient for the materially progressive age, but the balanced middle path between the maddened enjoying spirit of gross materialists and the extreme negativity of Māyāvāda. He stated:

> By causing awareness of *phalgu-vairāgya* and *yukta-vairāgya* to descend into this world, Śrī Gaurasundara completely nullified the impulsiveness of various unthinking individuals' Māyāvāda, propensity for material enjoyment, and so on.[18]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī often quoted *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.20.7–8, that persons excessively inclined to material enjoyment tend toward *karma* and those disgusted by mundane pleasures are inclined to *jñāna,* whereas persons who by good fortune have developed faith in hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa, being neither revulsed by nor overly attached to material

life, could achieve perfection through the path of *bhakti.* He also pointed out that the vision underpinning *yukta-vairāgya* was not merely pragmatic, but essential, for without seeing everything in relation to Bhagavān, one could not attain *prema,* the love for Him that is the requirement of every *jīva,*[19] and that "devotees must engage everything in Kṛṣṇa's service—failure to thus utilize any item means to employ it for personal enjoyment."[20]

Nevertheless, recognizing the risk in offering opulence to persons not wholly free from selfish desires, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura warned his disciples that while engaging money, women, and prestige in Hari-*sevā,* they not become entrapped in the deceitfulness of subtle enjoyment, and thus while ostensibly performing Hari-*sevā* actually become inimical to it.[21]

Four

Vaiṣṇava Sannyāsa

Being transcendentally perfect even before coming to this world, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī did not assume *sannyāsa* for his own spiritual benefit. But *sannyāsa* is required for preaching, because those who follow it strictly are widely respected, and their authority accepted. Therefore, just as Lord Caitanya had taken *sannyāsa* to attract people to His message, so did Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. Other important reasons for his assuming and awarding *sannyāsa* were: to provide formal roles of spiritual leadership within the pilot *daiva-varṇāśrama* Vaiṣṇava community that he proposed to establish, to uphold the worshipable status of the *paramahaṁsa* (*bābājī*) dress taken by his gurus Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī, Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda, and Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī, and to provide practical living manifestations of *yukta-vairāgya* as a challenge to the misconceptions of renunciation embodied in Māyāvāda *sannyāsa* and contemporary *bābājī* life.[*] However, reintroducing *sannyāsa* into the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* would prove to be one of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's most contentious innovations.

Traditionally, renunciation in the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* meant becoming a withdrawn *bābājī* absorbed in hearing and chanting the names of Kṛṣṇa. But nearly all *bābājīs* at that time were *prākṛta-sahajiyās* so far removed from the ideal of the Six Gosvāmīs that they were widely taunted as a class of knaves. Moreover, even if observed immaculately, ascetic life was largely irrelevant to the general populace, who for their practical religious needs looked to the caste Goswamis and *smārta-brahmaṇas;* yet these priests were usually as devoid of genuine spiritual consciousness as those they purported to guide. Even the few caste Goswamis who themselves strictly observed devotional principles were mostly unable to discipline or train their theoretical disciples. And virtually none of the supposed followers of Caitanya Mahāprabhu had any inkling of His desire for widespread preaching, nor the wherewithal to effect it. Clearly a change of paradigm was required if Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma in its pure form were to survive and Mahāprabhu's edict of worldwide *saṅkīrtana* be fulfilled. Thus Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's providing realistic, authentic, and dynamic outgoing spiritual leadership by investing *tridaṇḍa-sannyāsīs* was the first of several measures for giving new steerage and emphasis to the Gauḍīya tradition, transforming it into a global mission presenting Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti* in a manner relevant to modernity.

Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsa* being unheard of in Bengal, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his disciples had to repeatedly uphold its validity to skeptical inquirers, many of whom cited a *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa* verse that Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself had quoted, interdicting *sannyāsa* in Kali-yuga:

> *aśvamedhaṁ gavālambhaṁ sannyāsaṁ pala-paitṛkam*
> *devareṇa sutotpattiṁ kalau pañca vivarjayet*

> Five acts forbidden in Kali-yuga are: horse sacrifice, cow sacrifice, accepting *sannyāsa,* offering oblations of flesh to forefathers, and begetting children in the wife of one's brother.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would reply that Mahāprabhu had cited this reference to rebut a sinful anti-Vedic Muslim magistrate who wanted to justify beef-eating on the basis of Vedic scripture, and within that debate the topic of *sannyāsa* was mentioned only circumstantially.[1] In other words, Mahāprabhu never stressed prohibition of *sannyāsa,* but instead demonstrated the contrary shortly thereafter by Himself embracing *sannyāsa*. Nor in so doing did He violate *śāstra,* because the injunction forbidding *sannyāsa* in Kali-yuga is from a *rājasika Purāṇa* meant for *karmīs* and applies to *karma-sannyāsa,* to be undertaken exclusively by pure Vedic *brāhmaṇas,* who no longer exist in Kali-yuga and thus whose mode of renunciation should not be imitated by unqualified men.[*] Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī further explained that this scriptural directive was never meant to restrain suitable persons from dedicating their whole self to the intrinsic function of the soul, namely service to the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa. Moreover, that *smārta* Raghunandana had prescribed a full-day fast as atonement for failing to offer respect upon first seeing a sannyasi confirmed that even the most fastidious adherents to *śāstrīya* requirements had recognized the concept of *sannyāsa* in Kali-yuga. Ideological enemies further accused Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī of impropriety for taking *sannyāsa* "by himself," but the precedent had been set by the great Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* Śrī Rāmānuja.

Although in recent generations *sannyāsa* in the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* had been practically unheard of, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī pointed out that not only was Lord Caitanya a sannyasi, but so were His guru and *parama*-guru, that nine sannyasi associates of Mahāprabhu are listed in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (1.9.13–15) as roots of the Caitanya tree, and that Śrīmat Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, a prominent devotee of Lord Caitanya, was a *tridaṇḍa-sannyāsī*. Furthermore, the seminal *ācāryas* of the four recognized Vaiṣṇava *paramparās*— Śrī Viṣṇusvāmī, Śrī Nimbārka, Śrī Rāmānuja, and Śrī Madhva—and numerous others in their discipular lines had taken *sannyāsa* in Kali-yuga.[*]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura accepted and later bestowed *sannyāsa* according to the ceremony described in *Saṁskāra-dīpikā* for inducting renunciants, which had become identified with the rite known as giving *bhek* to *bābājīs.* He and his sannyasis dressed in the ankle-length red cloth of *sannyāsa,* similar to that of Ramakrishna Mission sannyasis, whose robes had become familiar and respected in Bengal.[†] Instead of *tridaṇḍas* of uncovered tied sticks like those of the Śrī *sampradāya,* Gauḍīya Maṭha sannyasis carried *tridaṇḍas* wrapped in strips of red cloth, resembling the *sannyāsa* rods of Māyāvādīs in North India. To the three sticks that represented dedication of body, mind, and speech in service to the Lord, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura added another stick to symbolize the *jīva,* and at the top of the *daṇḍa* placed a small curved stick, symbolizing an ax for cutting nondevotional theories.[2] Gauḍīya Maṭha *sannyāsa* differed from that within the established lines of Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, and Madhva in that it was not awarded solely to men of *brāhmaṇa* caste, and because horoscopes of prospective candidates were not consulted for ascertaining their fitness for lifelong renunciation.

Traditional Bengali Vaiṣṇavas objected that the status of *sannyāsa* invites respect and thus transgresses Lord Caitanya's precept of considering oneself lower than straw; that *sannyāsa,* being a role within *varṇāśrama,* is not meant for followers of Lord Caitanya; and that red garb for renunciants is directly against the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* statement *rakta-vastra 'vaiṣṇavera' parite nā yuyāya* (It is unbefitting that a Vaiṣṇava wear red cloth)[3] and thus is a deviation from the line of the Six Gosvāmīs—who had worn white—and moreover is particularly unsuitable for Vaiṣṇavas due to being similar to the apparel of impersonalist sannyasis. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī explained that by embracing *sannyāsa,* a devotee undoubtedly maintains a position within *varṇāśrama-dharma,* which implies that he is still endeavoring for perfection, rather than posing as if already having attained it—for a true *paramahaṁsa* is situated in his eternal spiritual identity, far above even the stage of sense control, but one such soul is hardly to be found among millions. The imitative *bābājīs'* knee-length off-white cloth girded at the loins was meant to symbolize the total *vairāgya* and purity of the Six Gosvāmīs, yet hardly any could meaningfully emulate that; indeed, many *bābājīs* shamelessly flouted basic moral principles.[*] Certainly himself a *paramahaṁsa,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī wanted to establish that the advanced realization of a *paramahaṁsa* cannot be attained simply through mimicry, and anyone aspiring for that platform should prudently remain humble and position himself as the servant of a *paramahaṁsa.* He commented:

> Knowing himself unequal to his *paramahaṁsa* guru, a Vaiṣṇava accepts *sannyāsa* to remain the eternal servant of his guru. Thinking himself unfit to dress as a *paramahaṁsa,* a Vaiṣṇava accepts *sannyāsa* out of humility, not pride.[4]

By adopting a uniform dissimilar to that of the ignoble *bābājīs,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī also sought to avoid being equated with them:

> Nowadays many people who do not even perform devotional service but instead indulge in crass immorality, are attired in a manner reserved for devotees on the superlative level of spiritual attainment and renunciation. Hence we propose that it is more appropriate to wear clothing suited to one's activities and social status, wherefrom to inwardly turn to the Lord.[5]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura downplayed the fuss over introduction of *sannyāsa* by putting it in perspective: "The Vaiṣṇava school does not attach much importance to this external formality of ascetic order, but considers it merely an ostentatious advantage for propaganda work."[6] Thus, although to facilitate his devotional service a devotee may assume any situation within *varṇa* and *āśrama,* he identifies himself as the servant of Viṣṇu and the Vaiṣṇavas, and not with any temporal position. Although ultimately beyond considerations such as the color, length, or design of cloth, advanced Vaiṣṇavas generally follow *śāstrīya* regulations meant for helping neophyte devotees and others recognize the position of a Vaiṣṇava. But Vaiṣṇavas are not bound by such secondary rules, and may accept whatever dress is suitable for their service and outward station in society. Stressing this principle, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura maintained the

original spirit of *śāstra* and the *ācāryas,* whereas the *bābājīs* mindlessly adhered to the outward form while lacking the essential spirit. As Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura wryly noted, "Whether or not one dons a *kaupīna,* it is to be seen whether the Lord is being served."[7]

Similarly, to those who contended that adopting *sannyāsa* and making vigorous propaganda was a deviation from the line of Śrī Rūpa and other Gosvāmīs, whom they supposed had lived limpid lives of contemplation and meditation in Vṛndāvana, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura responded that the Six Gosvāmīs had been busy researching, writing books, and preparing disciples for preaching, and that the discipline and dynamism of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, despite some differences in externals, were more akin to the monastic life of Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana than was the lifestyle of indolent *bābājīs.* Even if those *bābājīs* who actually practiced considerable *vairāgya* and *tyāga* were thereby able to remain aloof from the gross materialism that otherwise would impede their *bhajana,* by their withdrawing from the world they could hardly contribute positively to Mahāprabhu's mercy mission. In the past, numerous Vaiṣṇava and Māyāvādī sannyasis had moved about the world to disseminate their message and had been obliged to engage in doctrinal struggle. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura wanted to institute exactly that kind of *sannyāsa:* men ready to sacrifice everything to fight for Kṛṣṇa.

Through *tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī wanted to demonstrate the real standard of renunciation. Echoing Lord Caitanya, he referred to the *markaṭa-vairāgya* (monkeylike renunciation) of lascivious *bābājīs* who smoked and consorted with women.[8] As do many sadhus, monkeys live in forests, go naked, and eat only fruit, but their main concern is to enjoy their dozens of female companions. Likewise, although known as *vairāgīs,* various renegade *bābājīs* outwardly presented themselves as austere but clandestinely or even openly had promiscuous connections with libertine women who, after having been banished from mainstream society, congregated in holy places. Many contemporary *bābājīs* in Bengal, especially in Navadvīpa, lived with Vaiṣṇavīs known as *sevā-dāsīs,* who were mostly pre-menopausal widows or rejected adultresses.[*] Commonly, such philanderers and their concubines hailed from the lowest strata of society and were notoriously uncultured. These *bābājīs, sevā-dāsīs,* and their adulterine offspring collectively comprised a despised subcaste known as *boṣṭam*.[†] Thus the words *ākhḍā, vairāgī, vaiṣṇava,* and *vaiṣṇavī* had become epithets associated with fornication and other odious activities far beyond the pale of respectable society. With few exceptions, Vaiṣṇavas were considered untouchable—if not by birth, by their activities.

In contrast, the *vairāgya* of Māyāvādī sannyasis appeared substantial, for they were exceedingly strict and ascetic. But their rejection of the world was so sweepingly *nirviśeṣa* (undiscriminating and unqualified) as to encompass rejection of its essential relationship with Hari.[†] *Vairāgya* is meant to lead to *jñāna,* but the Māyāvāda portrayal of the Absolute Truth as attributeless was not *jñāna,* but hebetation and ignorance born of envy, for He is *bhajanīya-guṇaś ca anantaś ca nityaḥ,* worshipable due to being eternal, limitless, and characterized by all desirable qualities.[9] That Māyāvādīs endeavored so arduously to attain a goal that they themselves insisted was insubstantial had led Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī to dub their *vairāgya* as

*phalgu (*feeble). Thus another purpose of reintroducing Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsa* was to challenge the Māyāvādīs, who absurdly challenged Bhagavān Himself by declaring that merely by accepting *sannyāsa* a man becomes equal to Him: *daṇḍa-grahaṇa-mātreṇa naro nārāyaṇo bhavet*.[10] Their unwillingness to serve Bhagavān and their desiring to take His position suggested that the Māyāvādīs' apparently considerable *vairāgya* and *tyāga* was but the flip side of their suppressed desires for material enjoyment. Scorning their narcissistic humbug, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura wanted to establish that *sannyāsa* is meant neither for self-aggrandizement nor self-denial, but for acknowledging one's position of unflinching servitorship to the Lord. Thus he reintroduced *sannyāsa* according to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's ideal of *yukta-vairāgya,* to demonstrate and propagate such servitorship through the exemplary lives of individuals fully committed to it, with no other responsibility or diversion.

At some point before assuming *sannyāsa,* Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī had, under the guidance of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, donned an *upavīta* in the manner of upper-caste men. That in itself was revolutionary, for according to caste norms *kāyasthas* were disqualified from wearing such sacred threads. Furthermore, only "born *brāhmaṇas*" were allowed to enter *sannyāsa* life, whereupon the *ekadaṇḍīs* relinquished the *upavīta.* Vaiṣṇava *bābājīs* from *brāhmaṇa* families also discarded their *upavīta,* deeming it a symbol of caste pride. That Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī, not from a *brāhmaṇa* family, retained the thread upon renunciation sparked even more surprise and protest from persons ignorant of the differing conceptions of renunciation represented by Māyāvāda *sannyāsa* and *tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa*.[*]

While donning red cloth, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī kept his bead bag white, considering *japa* beads representative of the purely transcendental and thus not to be colored with *varṇāśrama* designations. White signifying the purity of a transcendentally situated *paramahaṁsa,* his retaining a white bead bag indicated his actual position—that his outward change of dress to facilitate preaching did not diminish his unchangeable internal attitude of genuine attachment to the holy names and concomitant detachment from anything material, such as the opportunity for self-assertion in the name of *sannyāsa.* Besides, it indicated that he conceived of *sannyāsa* as more than a strategic adjustment for preaching. And that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī later imparted to his *sannyāsa* disciples the esoteric *gopī-bhāva* mantra for Gauḍīya renunciants given in Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī's *Saṁskāra-dīpikā* suggested that, above and beyond renunciation, Gauḍīya *sannyāsa* is meant for embracing the mood of servanthood to the servants of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.[†]

Five

The Seer and the Seen

"*Draṣṭā* (the seer) and *dṛśya* (the seen)—are we *draṣṭā* or *dṛśya*? Whatever I have to say, my whole message is based on proper comprehension of this truth. But how few people have really understood this *dṛg-dṛśya-vicāra*!"[*] Showering tears, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura repeatedly spoke thus to Śrīpāda Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda while Sundarānanda was preparing materials for Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's biography.

The topic of *draṣṭā* and *dṛśya* is discussed in *Bhagavad-gītā, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* and other *śāstras,* but Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī clarified and stressed the point perhaps more than any previous *ācārya:*

> A *bhogī* (one who attempts to enjoy this world) considers himself *draṣṭā,* and everything else, including the Supreme Lord, to be *dṛśya,* his object of vision (*darśana*). Due to their bitter experience of this world, so-called renouncers wish to deny the plurality of *draṣṭā, dṛśya,* and *darśana,* and thus regard them as one. Only devotees have the proper vision to appreciate that Kṛṣṇa is the supreme enjoyer and alone is fully independent and no one's servant, but being *draṣṭā,* should be served by all, for the *jīvas* and all else that be are *dṛśya,* objects of His *darśana.*

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura often expounded Goloka-*darśana* (spiritual vision) versus *jagad-darśana* (worldly vision). By Goloka-*darśana,* Kṛṣṇa is perceived as the center of existence, and everything in this world as paraphernalia for serving Him; by *jagad-darśana* the *jīva* considers himself the center of existence and views everything, even the Godhead, as paraphernalia for his personal sense enjoyment. By Goloka-*darśana,* one sees and lives in the spiritual realm even while present in the mundane sphere:

> He who sees an object is called the seer, and an object seen by the observer is called the seen. The instrument of seeing is called sight. It is a common error to deem the sense of sight the actual seer. Whatever we can measure by any of our senses we also call a seeable object, and he who senses it is called the seer. It is best that the *jīva* see himself as the object of Kṛṣṇa's enjoyment. Thinking himself the seer, he sees the world as the object of his enjoyment. But thinking himself the enjoyer, under the influence of false ego, will result only in his misfortune. It is not fitting that the *jīva* see the world as the object of his own enjoyment. Rejecting that outlook, and instead seeing the world as the object of the Lord's enjoyment, seeing it as Kṛṣṇa's world or Gokula, is the *jīva's* good fortune and satisfies Kṛṣṇa's senses—"I am not the seer, but rather am seen by Kṛṣṇa. I am not the enjoyer, but the object of enjoyment for Kṛṣṇa."
>
> The enjoyers of this world think themselves seers, and the renunciants, in counter to the bitterness they have experienced in the world, ultimately conclude that the seer and

> enjoyer are *nirviśeṣa* (devoid of characteristics). But although it is inauspicious for the *jīva* to think himself the enjoyer and seer, it is even more inauspicious for the *jīva* to attempt suicide by killing the enjoyer and seer, thinking them to be a hangman's rope around the neck. The best path is to see oneself as the object of enjoyment of, and object of seeing by, the supreme enjoyer and seer. Hiraṇyakaśipu thought he was the seer of the pillar in his hall and desired to observe the existence of Viṣṇu, or to measure Viṣṇu, and adjudging himself the enjoyer, perceived Prahlāda as his son, the object of his enjoyment. But the Lord of inconceivable powers revealed His inconceivable eternal form to Hiraṇyakaśipu and destroyed that seer, and was very merciful to Prahlāda, who regarded himself as the object to be seen or enjoyed by Viṣṇu.

This precise and unequivocal ascertainment of the position of the *jīva,* and stressing this point as the essential foundation of *bhakti,* was the unique contribution that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura tried to inculcate in his disciples and the general public. The extent to which individuals, religions, and *sampradāyas* recognized, acquiesced to, and lived by it was in Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's estimation the litmus test of their genuineness, sincerity, and advancement in *bhakti.*

Being divisive, and certainly unpalatable to committed worldly sense enjoyers and advocates of a plurality of viewpoints, this ontological teaching gave definition to the Gauḍīya Maṭha as being not simply another religious organization, nor one characterized merely by high moral standards, but as philosophically distinct from other religious paths, and even from other Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas* and Gauḍīya subsects, and from Gauḍīyas and others who quoted *śāstra* but had not grasped this essential point by which *śāstra* is to be accepted.

> Whether or not their position has strength, all have the right to speak and make personal judgments. But giving up openness to different angles of vision in debate, everyone should instead come toward the truth and see things as they really are. *Dṛśya, darśana,* and *draṣṭā, sambandha, abhidheya, and prayojana*— all these subjects should be considered. These topics could not be exhausted even after talking on them day and night for five or ten days.[1]

This *dṛg-dṛśya-vicāra* was particularly a rebuttal to the Māyāvādī theory of *tripūṭi-vināśa,* which proposes that spiritual perfection lies in the *vināśa* (destruction) of the *tripūṭi* (three factors), namely between *jñāna* (knowledge), *jñeya* (the object of knowledge), and *jñātā* (the knower), with all merging into oneness.[*] These divisions parallel *dṛśya, darśana,* and *draṣṭā,* which Māyāvādīs also intend to amalgamate. Yet Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* had demonstrated that such homogenization being impossible, the goal of Māyāvādīs was even more illusory than their conception of the hypothetically illusory world they attempted to escape, and that the much-tooted Māyāvāda was thus an elaborate logical fallacy—while purporting to explain the meaning of existence, it is ultimately meaningless, and thus a stupendous hoax and a crime against God and humanity.

The practical application of *dṛg-dṛśya-vicāra* was brought out in Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's comments on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* 3.20.52:

> A devotee does not care about his own happiness and distress. He is interested only in seeing that Kṛṣṇa is happy, and for that purpose he undertakes various activities. A pure devotee has no way of sensing pleasure except by seeing that Kṛṣṇa is satisfied in every respect. If Kṛṣṇa becomes happy by giving him distress, such a devotee accepts that distress as the greatest pleasure.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was himself the exemplar of this ideal, incessantly serving Kṛṣṇa without desiring anything in return, and disregarding whatever could have been construed as his own physical or mental happiness.

> Those who are materialistic, who are very proud of worldly wealth and have no spiritual knowledge, consider their own happiness the aim of life, as do the *prākṛta-sahajiyās*. Some aspire to enjoy themselves by sharing the happiness of Kṛṣṇa. This is the mentality of fruitive workers who want to enjoy sense gratification by making a show of service to Kṛṣṇa.[2]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī described Padmā-*nīti,* the policy of Padmā (Kaṁsa's mother):

> "In payment for herding his cows, Nanda gives Kṛṣṇa a little milk and butter to eat. If Nanda were shown the account of the value of the milk and butter against the amount of work that Kṛṣṇa does, he would definitely give up Kṛṣṇa." Having the calculating mentality of a merchant, Padmā cannot understand how in guileless love devotees dedicate all their activities to Bhagavān. Nondevotees cannot comprehend how devotees give their all to Kṛṣṇa, and how Kṛṣṇa is more dear to Nanda than his very life. Therefore nondevotees resort to Padmā-*nīti* for conducting mercantile exchanges with Bhagavān.[3]

Similarly, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura often gave the example of Rāvaṇa's stealing *māyā*-Sītā, citing the statement *aprākṛta vastu nahe prākṛta-gocara:* "Spiritual phenomena are never within the jurisdiction of material intellection."[4] He would say, "If we make a show of living in Navadvīpa-*dhāma,* we do not live there at all. If we pretend to approach a guru and receive *dīkṣā* and *śikṣā,* then actually we do not go near or even see him. We are like bugs and mosquitoes on a sadhu, that can neither see nor touch the spiritual substance of his transcendental body." Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura always uttered words like *ādhyakṣika* (empiric) and *ādhyakṣikatā* (empiricism) with an air of distaste, and repeatedly decried empiricists' attempts to extend their mensural proclivity to the unlimited, and hence immeasurable, transcendental Personality of Godhead. Galileo's utterance "Measure what is measurable, and make measurable what is not" had ushered in the empiric ethos typifying that era, but Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura regarded such "enlightened thinking" as mere illusion. He would cite, *mīyate anayā iti māyā* (Māyā is the means of measurement), and he untiringly explained the import of words like *adhokṣaja* and *aprākṛta.*[5] [*]

To the many who came to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura with the premature and immature hope that he would show them God, he would reply, "Don't try to see God, but try to act in such a way

that He will want to see you." A *Gauḍīya* article entitled "Veṇu o Vapu" clarified:[†]

> One who asks a guru to show him Bhagavān can never really be attracted to the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa's flute, from which all *vāṇī* emanates. But those who genuinely want to serve the form of Godhead request a guru, "By your instructions please correct and purify me, and give me eyes by which I may actually see." Godhead must be seen first through the ears—first *vāṇī,* then *vapu.* The ears prepare the eyes.[6]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī did not deny the importance of the quest to see God; rather, he underscored its importance, stating that to behold the beauty of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's toenails is the only proper utility of the eyes. Yet he stressed that the only possible means to achieve such *darśana* is by developing a service attitude, which itself is tantamount to seeing God:

> It is necessary to seek the sight of Kṛṣṇa. That should be our first and only endeavor. Our souls can have no real function till we are face to face with the Divinity. Śrī Kṛṣṇa shows Himself to those who prefer His service to any other occupation.[7]

> Seeing Bhagavān means total engagement of the senses in His service. In other words, serving the Lord twenty-four hours a day with all one's senses means being established in one's primal constitutional position, in which one naturally sees Bhagavān. By the guru's mercy and strength gained from personal *bhajana,* one becomes fully aware of Kṛṣṇa's manifestation both internally and externally. This is seeing Bhagavān.[8]

In a lecture on 10 November 1936 in Purī, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī emphasized the type of faith required to approach the Supreme Lord:

> "I see the statue"—this kind of thinking is in the spirit of enjoyment, whereas "The deity sees me, my uncovered pure self" is deity *darśana.* If in the same way that I see a movie, drama, or gymnastic display or hear a song I think, "I can see the deity with my eyes and fathom Him by my intelligence," such an attempt will be on the material platform. One will derive no benefit from such inclinations not meant for satisfying the Lord's senses. Faith in the Lord entails not having faith in mundane enjoyment or renunciation. If one has faith in this world, then that is *bhoga* (enjoyment): "The objects of the world are for my enjoyment." Such a mentality is due to not having initiation and spiritual knowledge.
>
> Worldly people are completely different from devotees. Difficulties occur when one thinks that He who is to be served should serve oneself: "O Lord, take notice of me. I am coming to collect dues from you in the form of *dharma-artha-kāma-mokṣa* for sense gratification." Hiding this inner intention, a person says, *jagannātha svāmī nayana-patha-gāmī bhavatu me* (O Lord of the universe, be visible to me) and other such delirious *karma-kāṇḍīya* words. This is not *bhakti.* "I went and saw the holy place. I went and saw the tree. I went and saw Jagannātha. I went and saw the sadhu. Bestowing on them a degree, I have dismissed them and come here"—all of this is a matter of enjoyment and cannot at all be called service. If the consideration of "Who am I?" has not entered the

heart, and if *sambandha-jñāna* concerning my eternal object of worship never arises, then how will *śraddhā* and *śaraṇāgati* develop?

Without faith one cannot have *darśana* of the Lord or His devotee. Instead, malice and envy will appear. Why envy? One will become envious when another person rises higher than himself. In the opening of *Bhāgavatam, bhāgavata-dharma* is called the *dharma* of those sadhus who are without envy. All humanity is careering around only with the concept of *dharma-artha-kāma-mokṣa.* But the means for attaining such goals are not given in the *Bhāgavatam.* Therein one finds only discussion of devotion to the Lord, meant for His dedicated devotees. If I become slack in this understanding, I will waste my time in material knowledge derived from the senses. If the consciousness of serving wakens, rather than considering oneself the object of service, one can slash all the wickedness imbibed from father, mother, and mundane relatives.

Forgetting that the Lord is the enjoyer, one enters *saṁsāra.* She is called Durgādevī who, as the shadow energy of the Lord, disturbs us, makes us fools, and entrances us with *dharma-artha-kāma-mokṣa.* By the Lord's will she thus dazes us. By accepting the shelter of this shadow energy, there can be no good fortune. One must take shelter of the possessor of that energy:

daivī hy eṣā guṇa-mayī mama māyā duratyayā
mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etāṁ taranti te

This divine energy of Mine, consisting of the three modes of material nature, is difficult to overcome. But those who have surrendered unto Me can easily cross beyond it. (Bg 7.14)

sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvāṁ sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ

Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear. (Bg 18.66)

Persons absorbed in service to the Lord destroy their *saṁsāra,* whereas those disinclined to serve the Lord increase their *saṁsāra.* Those who drift in this world have no time for hearing about service to the Lord. Even if they make a pretense of hearing, they do so according to their own viewpoint. If they do not like what they hear, they reject it outright. They do not give priority to the topic of the Lord's service. They think that their present-day needs are more pressing. They consider it better for an intelligent person to spend his time hearing mundane poetry.

What right do we have to accept service from others? But in spite of that we think, “Let the whole universe serve me” and “I use the river water and fruit from the tree, but have no connection with the Lord.” If one wants to know about the Lord he must approach a devotee of the Lord. One cannot bypass the proper channel.

> Ordinary persons and *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs* cannot comprehend who is serving the Lord and who is not. Rather, they have the inclination to oppose those who serve the Lord because the service attitude and behavior of a devotee does not mix well with worldly so-called moral or immoral conduct. Materialists disparage devotees of the Lord, understanding that they are not instruments for the materialists' satisfaction and pleasure.[9]

In another lecture:

> Those with contaminated intentions cannot worship the transcendent Lord. Their entire way of thinking is quite different from that of the pure-hearted. The contamination is desire for *dharma-artha-kāma-mokṣa.* Those who buy a ticket of *dharma-artha-kāma-mokṣa* do not buy a ticket to the terminal station of *prema.* They revolve throughout the universe, or otherwise accept impersonalistic suicide as the ultimate aim. Even if they do buy a ticket of *prema,* they break journey in the middle—seeing the objects obtainable through *dharma-artha-kāma-mokṣa* they try to attain them.[10]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura demonstrated *dṛg-dṛśya-vicāra* when at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha he was once standing at the doorway of the inner sanctum looking toward the deities of Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga–Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī. Since Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was not wearing his spectacles, an accompanying disciple suggested that perhaps he was unable to properly see the deities. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura smiled and said, "We should not think of the Supreme Lord as an object of our vision. Instead, we should meditate on how we can acquire some qualification to become worthy objects of His vision. We should consider whether He wants to see us and reveal Himself to us."

Following the example of Lord Caitanya, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī took *darśana* of Jagannātha in Purī from a distance, from behind the Garuḍa-*stambha* at the entrance to the temple. He explained, "We will stand behind our guru, Garuḍa. Jagannātha will look at Garuḍa because Garuḍa is His devotee. Then He will also cast His merciful glance upon us." After once taking *darśana* in this way, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī expounded:

> Jagannātha is not *dṛśya,* but *draṣṭā.* Only when a *jīva* is wholly free from the conception of himself being *draṣṭā,* and when he is fully situated in the understanding of himself as *dṛśya* of Jagannātha and to be enjoyed by Him, then only can the *jīva* remain *sevonmukha* and with eyes of love actually have *darśana* of Jagannātha. As long as we think, 'I shall see Jagannātha,' then we shall not see Him, but only wood, stone, an object described in Buddhist literature, or an antique handless statue that is an object of our enjoyment. Eyes of flesh can never chalk out the *saccidānanda-vigraha.* Only persons who realize themselves as *dṛśya,* whose eyes see by hearing from *śāstra* or by chanting the holy names, may have *darśana* of the *saccidānanda* reality.[11]

On another occasion:

> One who sees must do so with *bhakti.* A pure devotee is a servant of Bhagavān, and

nondevotees are those with extraneous desires—*karmīs, jñānīs, yogīs,* and the rest. If in the mood of an enjoyer we go to see Jagannātha, regarding Him as an object of our enjoyment, then we will simply see a maimed wooden doll and return. Some will say, "Jagannātha is armless Rāma, a wooden doll." Others consider Him a wooden mannequin with spirit inside.[12]

When a devotee requested of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, "Be merciful to me. I want to see Bhagavān in this life," he was reproved: "Will you see Bhagavān or will Bhagavān see you? For your own satisfaction you want to see Bhagavān. This is not the correct attitude"—thus again insinuating that simply an impression on the retina is not sufficient for seeing the Supreme Lord; to actually see Him one must serve the guru and be awarded divine vision. As Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī insisted, "The path to see God is by service-inclined subservience to the guru, who is a transparent representative of the *paramparā,* and by waiting for and expecting the mercy of Kṛṣṇa."[13]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura emphasized that hearing from devotees is more important than independently reading *śāstra* or attempting to see the Lord directly. He would cite *śrutekṣita-pathaḥ* (the process of seeing by hearing) and explain, "Vision of Kṛṣṇa can be attained only through the medium of the ear, by hearing Hari-*kathā* from pure Vaiṣṇavas."[14]

When a man told him, "While sitting on the riverside yesterday I saw Kṛṣṇa," Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura asked him, "Did you not also see *māyā*? If you are still seeing *māyā*, it means you did not see Kṛṣṇa. You must have seen a ghost. The test of seeing Kṛṣṇa is to no longer be interested in *māyā.* Anyone can say he has seen Kṛṣṇa, but Rūpa Gosvāmī says:

smerāṁ bhaṅgī-traya-paricitāṁ sāci-vistīrṇa-dṛṣṭiṁ
vaṁśī-nyastādhara-kiśalayām ujjvalāṁ candrakeṇa
govindākhyāṁ hari-tanum itaḥ keśī-tīrthopakaṇṭhe
mā prekṣiṣṭhās tava yadi sakhe bandhu-saṅge 'sti raṅgaḥ

My dear friend, if you are attached to your worldly friends, do not look at the smiling face of Govinda as He stands on the bank of the Yamunā at Keśī-ghāṭa. Casting sidelong glances, He places His flute to His freshly blossoming lips. His transcendental body, bending in three places, appears very bright in the moonlight. (Brs 1.2.239)

So if you are still attached to *māyā* you could not have seen Govinda, for if you had really seen Govinda you could no longer remain attached to *māyā.*"[15]

A zamindar who was granted a private meeting with Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī sat close to him and earnestly whispered, "Have you seen Bhagavān?" Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī retorted, "What is the use if I say I have or haven't seen? As long as *you* do not know how to see Godhead, any statement about my seeing Him cannot benefit you. You must learn *how* to see Godhead. Otherwise, anyone can tell you that he has seen the Supreme Lord and you will be hoodwinked." The zamindar was not satisfied with this reply and repeatedly asked, "Have

you seen? Have you seen?" But Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī stuck to his point: "Without knowing who is the Supreme and the authorized process for seeing Him, any such declaration 'I have seen God' will only serve to deceive you."[16] Pursuant to this point, he once explained that without lacerating all *ku-darśana* (wrong philosophies) by *su-darśana* (correct philosophy), no one can attain *bhagavad-darśana* (audience of Bhagavān).[17*]

Shortly after disclosing *gāyatrī* mantras to some disciples, from within his room Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura overheard them conferring about the meaning of *kāma-gāyatrī,* discussing with alacrity the possibility of throwing flowers on Kṛṣṇa's body.[†] When at that time Śrīmat Śrīdhara Mahārāja entered his *gurudeva's* room, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura looked up with a deeply disappointed expression and gravely remarked that it is most difficult to throw a flower on Kṛṣṇa. Śrīmat Śrīdhara Mahārāja deduced his guru-*mahārāja's* inner feelings: "For crores of lives I have been trying to cast a flower upon Kṛṣṇa's body yet am still unable, but new initiates are glibly planning how to throw flowers on Kṛṣṇa. After devoting life after life, after untold trials, I am still unable to approach that point, but you greenhorns think that because you have now received the mantra you have achieved everything. It is not such an easy thing, like a sweetmeat to be taken and swallowed."[‡]

One day while Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was lecturing, the deities' *ārati* began and some listeners left to attend it. He commented, "They are going simply for eye exercises"—thereby indicating that the Lord cannot truly be discerned by those who have not properly heard. And in Purī, he commented similarly to a disciple who, having gone for *darśana* of Jagannātha, arrived at the end of his (Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's) *kāthā* in the Maṭha—a lecture in which he had expounded on the actual meaning of Jagannātha *darśana:*

> Even now you are very late. Even now you are wandering here and there, going to see Jagannātha—through these eyes. If you do not first attain spiritual knowledge through the ears, then going to see Jagannātha will simply be curiosity mixed with personal sense gratification. I am not saying not to go to the temple to see Jagannātha—but Jagannātha will see. The pretence of *darśana* by a person lacking an objective is no *darśana* at all. See Jagannātha as the object of service, different from the world of personal enjoyment. When you go to see Jagannātha do not just see the material world, but attain spiritual knowledge.[18*]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī applied this *dṛg-dṛśya-vicāra* not only to Bhagavān but also to those pure devotees who constantly see Him through eyes tinged with the salve of love. Like their worshipable Lord, such pure devotees cannot actually be observed, or their activities factually comprehended, by worldly perception. Thus he taught, "Do not try to behold a sadhu by the eyes, but by the ears, by hearing him."

One day a renowned professor came to the Gaudiya Printing Works to meet Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who was sitting there expounding Hari-*kathā* to his disciples. In course of conversation the professor related that he had recited the *Gītā* before Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and was well acquainted with him and some of his children. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura immediately

retorted, “You never saw Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. You were never in his presence.” The shocked professor replied, “For so many years I discoursed to him at Rāmabāgān, and you are not accepting this? I am elder to you. I even know all of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's children.”

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī became aroused and manifested his intrinsic nature as the lion *ācārya:* “Far from reciting the *Gītā* to Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, you were never able to see him. No mere professor can see Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. In our conception Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had no children. He was not a product of this material world. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura keeps himself hidden from those who think they are seeing him. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura reveals himself to one who understands that he is to be seen by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.”

The scholar was dumbstruck by this stinging analysis and could not grasp its deep import. Upon leaving he commented to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, “Never did I go to Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, never did I see him? My opinion is different from your proud words. He had some affection for me and never let me leave without feeding me. He said many confidential things to me. You sometimes saw that yourself. I am extremely aggrieved on hearing such unpleasant words from a sadhu like yourself.” Not concerned that such a reputed and learned person was leaving in a huff, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī remained unhesitant in speaking the truth and further declared, “As long as you have such mundane vision, you cannot see Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Become fixed in seeing yourself as the object of his sight.”[*]

During a Gauḍīya Maṭha festival a *śāstrī* known for being fond of good food was sitting for *prasāda.* While he was relishing the opulent sweet called *mālpuyā,* Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu addressed him, “O *śāstrī,* consider whether you are eating *mālpuyā* or the *mālpuyā* is eating you. *Paṇḍita hañā kene nā karaha vicāra*?: ‘Being a scholar, why don't you judge the matter?’[19] To maintain proper consciousness while taking *prasāda,* Vaiṣṇavas say *sādhu sāvadhāna* and recite the song of Bhaktivinoda.”[†] Not catching Vāsudeva Prabhu's point, the *śāstrī* became peeved and, on returning to his place, wrote an extensive letter to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura:

> I went to the festival at the *maṭha,* yet while taking *prasāda* I became disturbed at heart. I am not a poor man. I am getting a pension from the government. My two sons are earning well. My wife is most expert at preparing delicious varieties of food. I have eaten plenty of *mālpuyā*. I did not come to the *maṭha* to gorge on *mālpuyā*. But your disciple Ananta Vāsudeva said to me, “Are you eating the *mālpuyā* or is the *mālpuyā* eating you?” Hearing that, I became doleful. Am I so greedy that the *mālpuyā* would eat me?

On reading this, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura commented to his disciples in attendance, “Can the learned people of this world comprehend Vāsudeva's question? Even among us, are there more than a few persons who can grasp it? It is not within the ability of humankind to appreciate these matters. Only by Kṛṣṇa's mercy can all this be realized.” A reply was sent to the *śāstrī* conveying the real meaning of Vāsudeva Prabhu's words:

It is not fitting that we "eat" the *prasāda* of the Lord—that is, that we measure it. If the *prasāda* enjoys us, eats us, makes us its own, then we will conquer over matter and that will be to our benefit. The meaning of *prasāda* is "favor" or "mercy." The remnants of a Vaiṣṇava's *prasāda* are called *mahā-mahā-prasāda.* The *Bhāgavatam* states:

tvayopabhukta-srag-gandha- vāso-'laṅkāra-carcitāḥ
ucchiṣṭa-bhojino dāsās tava māyāṁ jayema hi

Simply by decorating ourselves with the garlands, fragrant oils, clothes, and ornaments that You have already enjoyed and by eating the remnants of Your meals, we Your servants will conquer Your illusory energy. (SB 11.6.46)

One should consider oneself the object of vision or enjoyment for the *prasāda* of the Lord or His devotee. To think oneself the seer and enjoyer will cause one to enter deeper within the kingdom of *māyā. Brahmavan nirvikāraṁ hi yathā viṣṇus tathaiva tat:* "Viṣṇu *prasāda* is as transcendental and free from degrading transformation as is Viṣṇu Himself."[20]

Everything about Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura is to be understood in terms of this *dṛg-dṛśya-vicāra.* Without understanding this, nothing about him can be understood. His *dṛg-dṛśya-vicāra* distinguishes him and all other authentic devotees from persons whose professed faith in God is motivated by personal intent. By this yardstick, which subsumes all flickers of truth found in other religious processes and reveals their insufficiency, whatever else is called sincerity is exposed as a mere shadow of unadulterated sincerity. Only those who have been blessed with this *dṛg-dṛśya-vicāra,* by the genuine desire to attain it, can begin to comprehend anything about the personality and teachings of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Others will necessarily blame him for the faults they ascribe to him due to their own refracted vision.

Six

Transcendental Morality

From the beginning of his life, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was known and respected for his high moral character, which was considered the minimal qualification of a gentleman, what to speak of a sadhu. At that time traditional morality, or the generic dharma described in *śāstra,* was becoming increasingly fused with the atheistic, utilitarian ideal that the ethical value of conduct is determined by its results; actions were deemed virtuous if they tended to produce the greatest weal for the largest number of people. But Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was not constrained by worldly moralism, whether traditional, mundanely religious, or newfangled. He taught that real morality means acting for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure, which alone constitutes the supreme good, because morals devoid of *śuddha-bhakti* are but eudemonistic social norms meant to genteelly bind conditioned souls in *māyā.* This transcendental outlook on morality, quite different from that of the mundane, was explained in Professor Sanyal's *Sree Krishna Chaitanya*, chapter nineteen:

> Too rigid empiric morality obstructs spiritual awakening more effectively than even confirmed immorality. This is due to want of humility and spirit of submission to the sadhu that is sure to be engendered more or less by the dogmatic professor of conventional morality. True morality is never possible prior to spiritual awakening. That which passes as morality in the society of worldlings is only a hypocritical, and therefore more dangerous, form of immorality. The moral instinct proper, which belongs to the soul, must not be confounded with this hypocritical immorality and its conventions. It is not possible for a person to be really and fully moral before he realizes the nature of his true self.
>
> It is not, of course, intended to undervalue the principle of morality in any way. That instinct, in its pure form, as in the case of every other instinct, belongs to the soul. The form in which it passes currently in the world is only the perverted reflection of the real principle and is not conducive to spiritual life. Its apparent advantages are strictly confined to this perverted existence. Whatever tends to reconcile us to the worldly life stands self-condemned for that very reason. Empiric morality is fully open to this charge of pandering to the unspiritual life. As a matter of fact neither conventional morality nor conventional immorality are praised by the sadhus, as, by themselves, they stand without any relation to the Truth. As soon as our conduct gets related to the Truth it assumes its natural state, which has nothing to do with either the conventional moral or immoral principle of this world. To call the spiritual conduct as merely moral in the ordinary conventional sense of the world, would, therefore, be wholly misleading. The spiritual conduct is no doubt perfectly wholesome, being free from all affinity with the unwholesome things of this world.
>
> The so-called “moral” conduct based on worldly experience owes all its value to its

worldly utility. This fact categorically differentiates spiritual "purity" from worldly morality. There is, of course, no possibility of immoral conduct on the spiritual plane. In the absence of all possibility of immorality there is no scope for worldly morality in the realm of the absolute. The kingdom of Godhead accommodates all varieties of conduct by endowing all of them with perfect wholesomeness. Can such conduct be appropriately called "moral" in the conventional sense of the term? Is it possible for the "ethical" mind to conceive of a state of existence that is infinitely higher than any conceivable worldly moral excellence?*

Lack of understanding of such subtle ethics gave rise to the frequent accusation that Kṛṣṇa Himself was immoral, especially in His dealings with the *gopīs*. This topic, which unenlightened moralists could not but mistake as being improper, was definitively explained in "The Erotic Principle and Unalloyed Devotion," a *Harmonist* article by Professor Sanyal, in terms of the transcendental morality of recognizing Kṛṣṇa as the superlative enjoyer.[1] Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī encapsulated this issue while on Vraja-maṇḍala Parikramā:

By confiscating the clothes of the *gopīs,* Kṛṣṇa obtained happiness. That is Kṛṣṇa's sense gratification. I cannot object, "Let us see Kṛṣṇa display sense control in His own conduct. Why is He a sense enjoyer?" Kṛṣṇa will not become a slave to my whims. If He so wills, supremely independent Kṛṣṇa can demonstrate sense restraint, as He did in His form as Gaurasundara. By that example He informs us that Kṛṣṇa's devotees do not have the right to steal the *gopīs'* clothing; only Kṛṣṇa has that prerogative. Our duty is to act at our level of eligibility, accepting everything conducive for Kṛṣṇa's service and thus attempting to assist Him in His enjoyment with His devotees.[2]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī shocked the challenging Professor Albert E. Suthers of Ohio State University by upholding the Gauḍīya conception of morality as superior to that of Christianity. The flabbergasted professor inquired, "How can Your Holiness's statements be reconciled with the descriptions of Kṛṣṇa's amorous sports?"

[Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī:] Kṛṣṇa's loving affairs are not temporal like the lustful romances of dramatic heroes and heroines such as Romeo and Juliet, or even of ideal spouses. Lust as prevalent in this world is merely a mental passion, whereas the lust of the transcendental world has its own form. Here lust is always goaded by the enemy, one of the six passions, whereas in the transcendental region of Kṛṣṇa, the loveliness of His spiritual body ever drives the lust for Kṛṣṇa, which takes form as sublimated love, or the desire to gratify the immaculate senses of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa's amorous sports are not to be called indecency, because Kṛṣṇa is the only one unrivaled enjoyer, embodiment of real truth, and spiritual despot.

[Professor Suthers:] I cannot fully appreciate this. Please let me understand it a little more clearly.

[Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī:] Suppose there are some angles—two right angles, four

> right angles, and so forth. There is the contracted character of a corner in the acute, obtuse, and right angle. But in the two right angles called the straight angle, even though called an angle, there is no contractedness or want of straightness, as with angles in general. Such is the case with the autocrat Kṛṣṇa. There is no want of contractedness or straightness, or despicable character or indecorousness, in the perfect entity Kṛṣṇa, like the perfect circle of 360 degrees, though the communities of enjoyers or renouncers championing morality or immorality may, due to the meagerness of their intellect, wrongly regard the lustfulness of Kṛṣṇa—the quality of that despotism that is His right alone—as vulgar, like that of common men and other creatures.[3]

Elsewhere Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura declared:

> Being perfected and increased millions of times, the topmost morality propagated by mahatma Jesus Christ is anxiously waiting to serve the morality of love of Godhead as cultivated by Vaiṣṇavas.[4]

> Genuine devotees of Kṛṣṇa are never inclined toward immorality. All desirable ethics are totally pledged to the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the very form of dharma. The highest ethical principle and science for the *jīva* is attachment to the Supreme Lord, the ultimate limit of which is found only in devotees of Kṛṣṇa.[5]

Equally controversial was the practical application of this transcendental approach to morality. Even devotees of Kṛṣṇa who were endeavoring to establish the highest principles sometimes felt constrained to adjust to the ways of a wicked and unbenign world. Hence the Gauḍīya Maṭha members, especially those involved in management, had to be sufficiently worldly-wise to deal with cheats, liars, ruffians, and other such less savory characters whose paths they inevitably crossed. In everyday dealings, Gauḍīya Maṭha members experienced that what is required to serve Kṛṣṇa sometimes contradicts the course of ordinary righteousness. While understandable that to achieve anything in this world, especially in the modern age of duplicity and hypocrisy, one is occasionally obliged to contravene the principles of standard morality, such apparent ethical departures by sadhus tended to arouse the ire of hypocritical prigs.

When a *gṛhastha* disciple who was visiting him during a tour requested permission to leave, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī suggested that he remain longer. But the disciple replied that he had to return to his hometown to attend his office. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī proposed that he simply submit a report of sickness and stay. A local lawyer who was present strongly remonstrated, “You are a sadhu, priding yourself on representing the truth, and this is how you teach your disciples, to tell lies?” The lawyer stormed out—whereupon, becoming inconsolably disturbed, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī completely desisted from speaking with anyone and from eating.

That evening Bhakti Sāraṅga Prabhu returned to find the whole camp plunged in gloom. He had been outside, busy in collection and organizational matters, but now learning of the exigency, he asked for the lawyer's address and said, “Give me the car.” Barging into the

lawyer's residence as soon as the door was opened, Bhakti Sāraṅga Prabhu immediately took up the issue: “Imagine if you saw robbers approaching your house and your wife was heavily ornamented—naturally you would hide her. If after looting whatever valuables they could find, the crooks asked if there was anything more, would you bring out your wife?” The lawyer had to admit no. Bhakti Sāraṅga Prabhu proceeded to explain that, in the same way, the need of a conditioned soul to hear from and associate with a pure devotee is so overwhelming that it must be had at any cost, notwithstanding minor infringements of social niceties.

The lawyer got the point. He then rode back with Bhakti Sāraṅga Prabhu to see Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. At a bazar along the way, he purchased a basket of fruit. On arriving in Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's presence, he profusely apologized for his indiscretion and presented the fruit, which Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura graciously accepted.

Such departures from ordinary morality were happily seized upon by niggling prudes, who were ever alert to find even a reflection of fault in sadhus and on that basis reject everything that saintly persons stood for. But Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī averred that sadhus are *adhokṣaja-vādīs,* whereas those who criticize them are *akṣaja-vādīs* (those who see through worldly vision, or empiricists). In a lecture he cited several examples of devotees’ acting against standard codes of proper behavior:

> When Kṛṣṇa appeared as the child of Vasudeva, Vasudeva misled Kaṁsa by pretending that Devakī had given birth to a female child.[6] Vasudeva was duplicitous for the sake of Kṛṣṇa.
>
> While performing *kīrtana* in Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura's house one evening, Lord Caitanya told Śrīvāsa, “Today I do not feel ecstasy in chanting. Is someone hiding here?” Śrīvāsa then found his mother-in-law crouching behind a basket, whereupon he grabbed her by the hair and threw her outside.[7]
>
> Similarly, Śrīvāsa once allowed an austere *brahmacārī* to hide in his home to see Lord Caitanya's dancing. When Lord Caitanya asked if any unknown person was present, Śrīvāsa answered yes, a pure *brahmacārī* who subsisted only on milk. But Lord Caitanya told Śrīvāsa, “Drive him away. Merely by drinking milk one does not qualify to attain Me.”[8]

He explained that worldly moralizers who might consider Vasudeva a liar, and Lord Caitanya and His followers fanatical, sectarian, and intolerant, can never understand the minds of the Lord and His devotees.

On another occasion:

> There is no dharma at all in subjects enjoyed by the masses. Whatever ethics or morality exist within the universe, and whatever external dharma is present, are not pure truth. All dharma, all truth, is situated at Mahāprabhu's lotus feet. On hearing this, people may say

that I am crazy, but I don't mind. Let them say that I have given up the correct path and gone in the opposite direction. I will continue on the opposite path.[9]

During Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's visit to Dacca in April 1935, a group of scholars came to hear from him, and one of them, the Sanskrit professor Śrī-yukta Abhaya Candra, M.A., opened the conversation by stating that as a result of modern education, today's students were becoming misbehaved, vulgar, and immoral, and thus it was not possible to speak to them about devotion to God, which they snorted at as if it were a laughing matter; yet without first giving religious instruction, moral standards could not be established. In reply, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura spoke at length to establish that the proper process is not to first become moral then take to *bhakti,* for genuine morality is a by-product of *bhakti,* and that morality professed as a principle independent of *bhakti* is actually godlessness, as is the conception of religion being a practice meant primarily to uphold morality. Continuing, he retold an instance from his student life, how in a lecture about the necessity of dharma the principal of the Sanskrit College stated that even without consideration of any God it is possible to lead a moral life, and that he (Siddhānta Sarasvatī) later privately protested to the principal that godless morality could only be opportunism or materialism, and thus could benefit neither the individual nor society at large. He cited Black's *Self Culture,* a prescribed book at the college that compared godless or humanistic morality to living in a kingdom without recognizing the authority of the king.[10]

While establishing that *śuddha-bhakti* was far above and of a wholly different nature than ordinary worldly morality, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī strongly contested pseudo-devotees' taking Vaiṣṇava dharma as an excuse for eschewing conventional moral fidelity. He stated, "The character of persons engaged in spiritual life is never devoid of morals. Individuals opposed to morality and those fallen from morality are never fit to be called spiritualists. Licentiousness can never be *bhakti.*"[11*]

Seven

Vaiṣṇavism and Vedic Literature

The authority of *śruti* over *smṛti* was accepted as axiomatic by almost all traditional Vedic scholars and also affirmed by Gauḍīyas.[*] However, Ārya Samājīs and a few others took the extreme stance of recognizing only *śruti*, and not *smṛti,* as genuine *śāstra.* They particularly stressed study of the *Upaniṣads,* which they venerated as the cream of *śruti,* while rejecting the *Purāṇas* as non-Vedic, as mere stories meant for persons insufficiently intelligent to tackle the high philosophy of the *Upaniṣads.* Thus they equated the Vaiṣṇavas' giving prominence to the *Purāṇas* as being symptomatic of unscholarly, naive sentimentalism.[†] But Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* had always contested such claims, and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was heir to this controversy. Especially in his addressing learned non-Vaiṣṇavas, a recurrent theme was the misunderstanding that Vaiṣṇavism in general, and Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism in particular, is non-Vedic and therefore not on par with the philosophical lucubrations of those who deemed themselves distinguished Vedic authorities.

In reply to such challenges, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura highlighted Gauḍīya appreciation of the *Upaniṣads* and simultaneously upheld the Vedic status of the *Purāṇas.* He cited that Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, the accepted philosophical authority for the Gauḍīyas, had in his canonic *Sandarbhas* quoted widely from the *Upaniṣads.* And another great Gauḍīya *ācārya,* Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, had not only prepared his *Govinda-bhāṣya* on *Vedānta-sūtra* with profuse quotations from the *Upaniṣads,* but also personally commented on ten principal *Upaniṣads.* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī referenced *śruti* to refute the oft-cited claim that, unlike *śruti,* the *Purāṇas* are not *apauruṣeya* (supramundane). He quoted, *itihāsa-purāṇaḥ pañcamaḥ vedānāṁ vedaḥ* (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 7.1.4), which terms the *Purāṇas* and histories, including *Mahābhārata,* as the fifth Veda, and also reiterated how in his *Tattva-sandarbha* Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī had established *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as the supreme Vedic evidence.[*]

Conversely, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had to address the erroneous outlook of those supposed Gauḍīyas who considered study of the *Upaniṣads* and *Vedānta-sūtra* impersonal speculation and thus not above, but below, their level of realization. Notwithstanding that *ācāryas* of all recognized Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas* had composed commentaries on these works, certain *sahajiyā* groups, under the misconception that real devotees discuss only *līlā* and never philosophy, most offensively regarded even *Govinda-bhāṣya* as loathsome philosophical ideation, and *ācāryas* of the caliber of Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa as not pure devotees, but mixed, whose approach to *bhakti* was tainted by nondevotional *jñāna.*

Following the previous Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas,* who gave paramount importance to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*) while also upholding the dignity of the other *Purāṇas,* the *Upaniṣads,* and other Vedic texts, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura explicated that the root of all fallacies concerning these scriptures was miscomprehension of the nature, scope, and purpose

of Vedic knowledge and literature. In the course of a long discussion at the residence of the learned and inquisitive zamindar Śrī Śaradindu Nārāyaṇa Rāya, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura addressed the contention of those *prākṛta-sahajiyās* who spurned the Vedas, *Mahābhārata, Bhagavad-gītā,* and other such *śāstras* as lower than *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and thus largely irrelevant. He narrated an explanation given to him by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura that these scriptures are of the same quality as *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and thus never to be disrespected, and further clarified that particular passages in scriptures such as *Mahābhārata* might be bewildering to *asuras, karmīs, jñānīs,* and false devotees, but not to sufficiently qualified devotees, and that those Vedic mantras that apparently do not describe Viṣṇu, in fact do so exclusively, yet unless understood through *vidvad-rūḍhi* will indubitably be misunderstood.

Śaradindu Babu expressed the common doubt that the language of the *Purāṇas* reveals them as modern compositions, in contrast to the Vedas, which by linguistic analysis appear to be much older. In reply, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura gave the example that a person's body remains the same when he changes his attire; similarly, although the *Purāṇas* are sometimes lost and then re-presented anew in varying forms and idioms suitable to changing circumstances, their fundamental nature remains intact. Hence, to classify the *Purāṇas* as modern is as childish as thinking that the sun arisen today is new and different from that seen by our forefathers; rather, the *Purāṇas* are the oldest *śāstras* and have no actual appearance or disappearance. Indicating the racecourse opposite Śaradindu Babu's house, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura offered another analogy: if through the window one espies a jockey and steed go past, he would not consider that the moment they crossed his vision constituted their total span of existence; he would realize that he had caught only a glimpse of them, that their existence began before his seeing them and would continue into the future. Basing his arguments on those given by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī in his *Tattva-sandarbha* (12), Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura further explicated that *purāṇa* means "the oldest" and that the *Purāṇas* eternally coexist with the Vedas and thus are known as the fifth Veda: "*Pūraṇāt purāṇam:* 'The term *Purāṇa* comes from the word *pūraṇa* (completion).' The *Purāṇas* are so named because they clarify, supplement, or resolve points not self-evident in the Vedas."[*] Śaradindu Babu profusely thanked Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura for purifying his home, and cited, "I came to scoff, but stayed to pray," admitting that he needed to unlearn everything he had learned throughout his life.[1†]

The language and style of the *Upaniṣads* being dissimilar to that of the *Purāṇas,* they were often regarded as a disparate genre of literature. The *Upaniṣads* consist largely of philosophical abstrusities that to supposed *jñānīs* appear to uphold spiritual non-differentiation as the goal of the Vedas. But such *jñānīs'* penchant for cultivating knowledge meant for achieving such impersonal realization was condemned by Vaiṣṇavas as a blunder and major obstacle on the path of understanding the actual truth described in the Vedas. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura wanted to establish the *śāstrīya* version that all *śāstras* are glorious because they glorify Hari; therefore the *Upaniṣads* are treasured by genuine devotees, who do not relegate them to the domain of speculative *jñānīs.* He would quote the Upaniṣadic utterance *sarve vedā yat padam āmananti,* referring to "the object (the Supreme Personality of Godhead) about which all the Vedas speak,"[2] and the *Gītopaniṣad* (*Bhagavad-gītā*), wherein Lord Kṛṣṇa declares, *vedaiś ca sarvair*

aham eva vedyaḥ: "All Vedic literature is meant for knowing Me."[3] He thus demonstrated that although most of the *Upaniṣads* appear not to indicate Kṛṣṇa, He is their only subject matter. The indirect approach of the *Upaniṣads* is *parokṣa* (mysterious or encrypted) and is dear to Kṛṣṇa.[*] The *Upaniṣads* can be accepted in opposite ways: one that increases devotion, and another that leads away from devotion, according to the attitude of the student. *Dve vidye...:* "There are two kinds of educational systems."[†]

At Rādhā-kuṇḍa in 1935, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura further expounded this theme in a series of speeches explaining *śuddha-bhakti* through the *Upaniṣads*. He opened by quoting Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī on how the *Upaniṣads* worship the holy name of Kṛṣṇa:

> *nikhila-śruti-mauli-ratna-mālā-*
> *dyuti-nīrājita-pāda-paṅkajānta*
> *ayi mukta-kulair upāsyamānaṁ*
> *paritas tvāṁ harināma saṁśrayāmi*
>
> O Harināma, the tips of the toes of Your lotus feet are constantly worshiped by the radiance emanating from the string of gems known as the *Upaniṣads,* the crown jewels of all the Vedas. You are eternally adored by liberated souls. O Harināma, I take complete shelter of You.[4]

In one of these lectures Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī spoke from the first three verses of *Īśopaniṣad,* on which he was writing a commentary.[‡] In another, he demonstrated how Gaura-*tattva* is described in the *Upaniṣads.* And in a third, he addressed the question of *līlā* not being overtly described in the generally acknowledged corpus of *śruti;* by following the conclusion established by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī in *Tattva-sandarbha*—that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* rather than *śruti* is the topmost Vedic evidence—he rebutted the epistemology of those who considered themselves orthodoxly Vedic:

> The outlook of *śruti* does not oppose acceptance of the pastimes of Bhagavān. Yet, since *śruti* is merely the first step in spiritual education, *līlā* has not been clearly treated therein. The purpose of *śruti* is to vanquish the attitude of enjoying sense gratification, for without such preliminary preparation it is not possible to approach transcendental *līlā*.[5]

Debunking a common misconception, the *Harmonist* essay "Viṣṇu and Vaiṣṇava" demonstrated that Viṣṇu-*bhakti* is positively and amply described in the four Vedas.[6] And to the frequent challenge that chanting the holy names, including the *mahā-mantra,* was a recently introduced practice not mentioned in the Vedas, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would reply with evidence from *Ṛg Veda* that the name of Viṣṇu is not only mentioned but highly glorified in the Vedas:

> *oṁ āsya jānanto nāma cid vivaktan mahas te viṣṇo sumatiṁ*
> *bhajāmahe oṁ tat sat*

> O Viṣṇu, Your name is transcendental and thus self-manifest. Even without properly comprehending the glories of chanting Your holy name, if we vibrate Your name with at least a little insight into its glories—that is, if we simply repeat the syllables of Your holy name—we shall gradually understand it.[7]

As further testament that the *mahā-mantra* is found in the Vedas, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī quoted the *Kali-santaraṇa Upaniṣad* (5–6), in which the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* is mentioned:

> *hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare*
> *hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*
> *iti ṣoḍaśakaṁ nāmnāṁ kali-kalmaṣa-nāśanaṁ*
> *nātaḥ parataropāyaḥ sarva-vedeṣu dṛśyate*
>
> The sixteen names of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare, Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—destroy all the contamination inherent to Kali-yuga. This is the conclusion of all the Vedas.

And he clarified how the nature of the *mahā-mantra* is distinct from other Vedic mantras:

> *Mantra* means "that which delivers the mind from the mental plane." Vedic mantras are characterized by having four lines and such invocatory terms as *namaḥ* and *svāhā.* The *mahā-mantra* is different from other mantras. Comprised of the names of Bhagavān, it is meant for calling out to Him. It is more powerful than any other mantra or process.[8*]

Eight

Exoteric Matters

Appearance and Dress

At just over six feet in height, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was considerably taller than most Bengalis. His arms were long and his form gracile. His complexion was fair and his forehead broad. Normally he wore unassuming sannyasi attire, consisting of top and bottom pieces of non-stitched cotton dyed red, and sometimes a *pāñjābī,* and in winter a coat, cardigan, or *cādar*. Three strands of *tulasī* beads adorned his neck, and an *upavīta* hung either over his shoulder and across his chest, or was sometimes looped around his neck. He almost always wore simple round spectacles (in later life, bifocals). He would sit with his back erect, not leaning on anything for support, and typically appeared grave. His skin was so delicate that even the slightest touch would redden it. Devotees who touched his lotus feet found them to be soft like butter. Plain wooden sandals were his normal footwear. His *tilaka,* formed of sacred *gopī-candana* clay, was always straight and neat, even though he applied it without using a mirror. He did not like to be seen without *tilaka,* and after bathing he would apply it before letting anyone see him. In later life he took a walking stick when going outside, and in rain or strong sunlight a disciple would hold an umbrella over him.

For special occasions Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī sometimes dressed opulently, with leather shoes, a plush gown or long coat, and a turban. Usually only when dressing formally did he wear his wristwatch (in that era a status symbol unexpected of sadhus).

Since it was customary to offer gifts of cloth to sadhus, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura mostly wore clothes given to him by devotees.

Daily Activities

Although fully engaged in preaching, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī did not neglect basic devotional practices. He was simultaneously absorbed in cultivating and also distributing *śuddha-bhakti* and did not waste a moment in anything else. He rose early, typically by two o'clock, or at the latest three-thirty. After bathing and so forth, he chanted *japa* and at four-thirty attended *maṅgala-ārati.* If not otherwise engaged, then after morning temple services he usually dictated essays and book manuscripts to Vāsudeva Prabhu, who would transcribe them. When writing, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī preferred a wooden table and chair rather than to sit on the floor. After lunch he dictated letters before conducting *iṣṭa-goṣṭhī* with his disciples. Around four o'clock he would again bathe.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura liked to take a late afternoon stroll. In Purī he would saunter up and down the beach; in Māyāpur, on the road in front of the *maṭha;* and in Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, along the balcony, or sometimes throughout the compound. While walking he would chant *japa* or *śāstrīya* verses, or if accompanied by a few disciples or visitors, discuss topics of Kṛṣṇa or how to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world.

In the evening he sometimes attended *ārati* and delivered a lecture, but more often he met guests or spoke to senior disciples. After supper, at around nine o'clock, he would speak with visitors or again walk back and forth outside his room. He would retire around eleven o'clock.

Nine

The Gauḍīya Maṭha

By establishing over sixty Gauḍīya Maṭha branches, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī created opportunities for both renunciants and householders to execute the five primary activities of *śuddha-bhakti* as enunciated by Lord Caitanya:

> *sādhu-saṅga, nāma-kīrtana, bhāgavata-śravaṇa*
> *mathurā-vāsa, śrī-mūrtira śraddhāya sevana*
>
> *sakala-sādhana-śreṣṭha ei pañca aṅga*
> *kṛṣṇa-prema janmāya ei pāṅcera alpa saṅga*
>
> Associating with devotees, chanting the holy names, hearing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* residing at Mathurā, and worshiping the deity with faith—these five are the best limbs of *sādhana.* Even a slight performance of these five wakens Kṛṣṇa-*prema.* (Cc 2.22.128–29)

As the key to engaging people in the bona fide principles of *sādhana-bhakti,* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura provided authentic *sādhu-saṅga*—in contrast to the prevalent cheating varieties. This genuine *sādhu-saṅga* was the key to performing the other four vital activities, which could not be effectively undertaken without the association of bona fide devotees.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī delineated his mission by stating that the four tasks given by Lord Caitanya to Sanātana Gosvāmī—rediscovering and reviving lost holy places, preaching *bhakti-siddhānta,* establishing Vaiṣṇava behavior and society, and revealing service to deities—were also bequeathed to himself and his followers, and that by performing these activities during this lifetime, devotees would achieve Lord Caitanya's blessings for the next.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had criticized (as being against the spirit of renunciation) the practice of putative *vairāgīs'* erecting *ākhḍās* so as to take advantage of Hindu sentiment for giving donations and thereby procure a regular income for cushy living.[*] Some people accused that the Gauḍīya Maṭhas, with their facilities for residence and cooking, were a similar compromise between renounced and family life. But quoting from a song by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would say that the Gauḍīya Maṭha was *kṛṣṇera-saṁsāra* (Kṛṣṇa's home). Every *maṭha-vāsī* was to perform every activity solely for the pleasure of the household proprietors, namely the deities Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga–Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī. Thus *maṭha-vāsa* was equated with Vraja-*vāsa.*

The sublime purpose for which Gauḍīya Maṭha branches were established was summarized in the *Gauḍīya* upon the inauguration of the Śrī Sanātana Gauḍīya Maṭha in Banaras:

> *bhārata-bhūmite haila manuṣya janma yāra*

janma sārthaka kari' kara para-upakāra

One who has taken birth as a human being in Bhārata-varṣa should make his life successful and work for the benefit of others. (Cc 1.9.41)

To fulfil that instruction this *maṭha* has been founded. The purpose of Śrī Sanātana Gauḍīya Maṭha is to practice (*ācāra*) and preach (*pracāra*) *sanātana* Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma.*

For almost half a century these associates of Gaura preached door to door to all people the practiced and preached message of *śuddha-bhakti* of Śrī Gaurasundara, who had descended with His *dhāma.* Śrī Gaurasundara is not merely the worshipable God of Bengalis. His teachings are not merely a sectarian dogma. Śrī Gaurasundara's pastimes of practicing and preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness are not temporary, but are for all places at all times, and are the only acceptable method for all people equally. This should be made known to the inhabitants of the universe.

pṛthivīte āche yata nagarādi grāma
sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma

In every town and village on earth, My name will be proclaimed. (Cb 3.4.126)*

For preaching *sanātana-dharma* and *śuddha-bhakti* so that all people in the universe would know these teachings, the personal associates of Gaurāṅga, under the guidance of the *ācārya,* established a preaching center at Banaras, a holy place where Lord Caitanya and His devotees had placed their lotus feet. This Maṭha was named Śrī Sanātana Gauḍīya Maṭha and was established on the thirtieth of the month of Vaiśākha, 1333 Bengali era (13 May 1926), 440 years after the appearance of Gaurāṅga.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura commented on the quality of association that the Gauḍīya Maṭha afforded:

We were thinking it highly unlikely that we could be blessed by the audience of such immaculately perfect personalities as those who appeared at the time of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. But fortunately Śrī Gaurasundara has caused us to meet such great souls who are in no way less than the devotees of the period of His manifested pastimes, for they are always engaged in Hari-*bhajana* and Hari-*kīrtana*.[1]

Considering myself weak, I was afraid that after the departure of my *gurudeva* I would be unable to hear his *kathā* and therefore would follow the wrong course. But now my *gurudeva* has taken many avatars and is present before me in many forms who perform *kīrtana* and read and explain *Bhāgavatam* to me. When by their explanations, ever new and approved by my *gurudeva,* they bring life to my dead body, then I gain consciousness. Thus I have the good fortune to be occupied twenty-four hours daily in

śravaṇa and *kīrtana* of Hari-*kathā*.[2]

Recalling his lone struggle in the early days at the Yogapīṭha, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī remarked in a 1933 lecture, "Śrī Gaurasundara has sent hundreds of qualified persons to help me, every one of whom is competent to fulfil the *mano-'bhīṣṭa* of Śrī Gaurasundara." [3]

In Delhi a young man asked, "Why do you claim that the Gauḍīya Maṭha is the only way to God? Is there really no other path?" Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura answered, "Do you think there can be any method to approach God other than associating with those whom Godhead Himself has selected for His service?"[*] And in a lecture he stated similarly:

> Nondevotees will say, "Is your path the only way? Is only the Gauḍīya Maṭha performing religious activities?" We will reply, "Yes, our Vaiṣṇava dharma is the only dharma. Whenever you become fortunate, either in this birth or another, you will be able to understand this." [4]
>
> The *Harmonist* clarified:
>
> The activities of the Gauḍīya Maṭha are categorically different from the ordinary activities of this world. They are also different from worldly activities that are conducive under the sanction of the scriptures to the attainment of spiritual service. The activities of the Gauḍīya Maṭha are the transcendental function itself to which the worldly functions have to be subordinated for the gradual attainment of the summum bonum. The Gauḍīya Maṭha is, therefore, a truly unique institution. It is different from all secular institutions and also from all religious institutions that practice worldly activities under spiritual sanction.[5]

Notwithstanding this declaration of spiritual singularity, much of what the Gauḍīya Maṭha did was in simulation of and counteraction to the Ramakrishna Mission. The main orchestrator of Gauḍīya Maṭha activities, Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu, had formerly frequented the Ramakrishna Mission, which by expert organization and management had established many *maṭhas,* published numerous books and journals, and become so highly respected and popular, especially in Bengal, that few people could even begin to hear any criticism of it. Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu envisioned comparable success for the Gauḍīya Maṭha by fashioning it along similar lines. And even though the two societies were almost totally opposed philosophically, many of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's innovations to the Gauḍīya world—*maṭhas,* sannyasis, use of modern conveyances and contraptions, overseas propaganda—and indeed the whole pattern of cultural detente with, rather than withdrawal from, the contemporary world, had already been effectively launched by the Ramakrishna Mission.

Despite its regimented character, the Gauḍīya Maṭha had no written constitution or charter nor a defined polity. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was referred to as its president-*acāryā* and Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu as its secretary. Although neither function bore a defined portfolio, being the *maṭha-rakṣaka* of Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu oversaw the *maṭha-rakṣaka* of each other Maṭha, and was himself overseen by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who, albeit delegating most

details of day-to-day administration to Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu and other leading disciples, kept abreast of and was involved in the workings of the institution.

Although spread throughout India and beyond, with many situated in materialistic metropolises, the Gauḍīya Maṭha branches were all connected to and had their spiritual roots in Śrī Māyāpur-*dhāma,* specifically via Śrī Caitanya Maṭha.[*]

The Gauḍīya Maṭha was declared "the instrument and counterpart of His Divine Grace Parivrājakācārya Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja. It lives and moves and has its being in the founder-*ācārya,*" [6] and "identical with its founder-*ācārya.* The associates, followers, and abode of His Divine Grace are limbs of himself." [7] All procedures and undertakings of the Gauḍīya Maṭha were rooted in eternal principles through the medium of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, the then current link in the chain of spiritual preceptors:

> All activity of the Gauḍīya Maṭha emanates from His Divine Grace Paramahaṁsa Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, the spiritual successor of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, who was originally authorized by Śrī Caitanya-deva to explain the process of loving spiritual devotion for the benefit of all souls. The reality of the whole activity of the Gauḍīya Maṭha depends on the initiative of the *ācārya.*[8]

In their solid philosophical basis, and spirit of dynamic, dedicated service, the Gauḍīya Maṭhas and their indwellers reflected Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's specific approach to *bhakti* and were manifestations of his unlimited desire to serve Hari-guru-Vaiṣṇavas in unlimited ways, especially by promulgating their message. All endeavors centered on service to Hari-guru-Vaiṣṇavas, performed in two main divisions, *kīrtana* and *arcana,* of which *kīrtana* was principal:

> Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda are the center of all activities of the Gauḍīya Maṭha. The inmates have no other duty excepting the service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda. The service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda consists of two distinct functions, viz., (1) *kīrtana* and (2) *arcana. Arcana is* the ordinary form of worship. It appeals directly to all the senses. The holy forms of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda stand manifest to our view ready to accept our service. This is effected in a very simple way. The worshiper regards himself as the servant of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda. The house belongs to the Lord. The food is prepared for the Lord. Money is employed for the maintenance of the household of the Lord. The servant may accept only after the Lord has been served, whatever the Lord is pleased to allot for his maintenance. The servant must have no relationships except for the service of the Lord. He has to procure the necessaries for the service of the Lord by begging from door to door, as it is the only duty of every person to give voluntarily their all for the service of the Lord, with no expectation of any return. They are to offer to the Lord whatever is obtained in this way and reserve nothing for their own personal use. They are to accept whatever may be given to them from day to day by the Lord for their maintenance. But they must not have any thoughts for their own maintenance. This is realized in practice by unconditional submission to the *ācārya.*

Arcana is properly performed only if it be constantly kept alive by means of *kīrtana.* The Gauḍīya Maṭha provides for the constant *kīrtana* of the name, form, quality, activity and the specific service of the devotees of Godhead. They are simultaneously distinct and identical, and also inconceivable except by grace. *Kīrtana* thus constitutes the fundamental activity of the Gauḍīya Maṭha.[9]

Logo

Designed by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the Gauḍīya Maṭha logo depicted *bhāgavata-mārga* (the path of devotion centered on *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana,* culminating in spontaneous devotion, *rāga-bhakti*) and *pāñcarātrika-mārga* (the path of *bhakti* according to scripturally prescribed regulations, *vidhi-mārga,* centered on *arcana*) functioning side by side.[*] The words thereon were written either in Sanskrit Devanāgarī or Bengali script.

The right side represents *bhāgavata-* or *rāgānuga-mārga,* and the left, *pāñcarātrika-* or *vidhi-mārga.*

In the top segment stands Lord Caitanya, His hand upraised, encouraging everyone to join in *kīrtana.* To His left is the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Below (in the three o'clock position) stand Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and the word *rāgaḥ,* signifying *rāga-mārga.*

Beneath Them is a printing press, a *mṛdaṅga,* and the word *kīrtanam*— signifying that both chanting the names of Kṛṣṇa to the accompaniment of *mṛdaṅga,* and printing books about Kṛṣṇa, are forms of *kīrtana,* this combination being the chief *sādhana* for *rāgānuga-bhaktas.*

At the bottom is a *tilaka* symbol and the words *guruḥ* and *gauḍīyaḥ.* To the left are a bell, the word *arcanam,* and a ghee lamp.[*]

Above these are Śrī Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa upon a throne, and the word *vidhiḥ,* indicating the mode for worshiping Them. Over Them is the *Pañcarātram,* which describes the process of *arcana.*

Within the six triangles forming a star in the center are words denoting the six prominent opulences of the Supreme Personality of Godhead: *(from the top, proceeding clockwise) yaśaḥ* (fame), *śrī* (beauty), *jñānam* (knowledge), *vairāgyam* (renunciation), *aiśvaryaḥ* (wealth), and *vīryaḥ* (strength).

Written in the center of the star is *oṁ nāma. Om* is generally taken as the nonspecific sound representation of the Absolute Truth but is understood by Vaiṣṇavas to be Bhagavān and His internal potency. *Nāma* is the specific name of the Absolute Truth, the Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and being nondifferent from Him is the possessor of the six opulences.

Regarding the Gauḍīya Maṭha logo, a *paṇḍita* once asked Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura: "All the depictions are traditionally Indian except the printing press. Why have you kept this foreign item there?"[†] Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura answered, "Anything used for Lord Caitanya's *kīrtana* is neither foreign nor Indian, but *aprākṛta.* When used in Kṛṣṇa's service, the press is as sacred as the *ārati* paraphernalia or the *khol* and *karatālas.*"

Daily Schedule

Each morning at four o'clock the large bell hanging in each Maṭha was rung to wake still-sleeping *maṭha-vāsīs.* Sometimes Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura himself would go to the *nāṭya-mandira* and wake whoever was still sleeping there. Next was a program of spiritual services continuing for several hours, with some variations in the format and timings between different Maṭhas. Generally in summer, morning functions were held a little earlier and evening functions a little later.

A typical day in each Gauḍīya Maṭha began shortly after rising. Devotees would congregationally sing *Gurvaṣṭaka* by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, "Vaiṣṇava-vandanā" by Devakīnandana dāsa, which offers respects to all Vaiṣṇavas, and then "Śrī Guru-paramparā," Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's composition describing the Brahma-Mādhva-Gauḍīya succession, utterance of which fulfilled the requirement that every disciple within every *sampradāya* must early each morning recite the names of prominent *ācāryas* in his *paramparā,* from its inception to the present. Then *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* was read for a few minutes. This was followed by *maṅgala-ārati* at four-thirty. Attendance was compulsory. Any devotee who had not bathed by four-thirty, due to sickness or late rising, would stand at the back hugging the wall, far away from those who had bathed and donned fresh cloth. During *maṅgala-ārati,* the first prayer sung was Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *ārati kīrtana* beginning *bhāle gorā-gadādharera ārati nehāri,* followed by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda's *śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu jīve dayā kari* (the opening prayer of *Śaraṇāgati*). Then *śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu nityānanda śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda* was chanted once or twice, and for the remaining few minutes *kīrtana* of the *mahā-mantra*. Upon completion of the *ārati* and *kīrtana, jaya-dhvani* was recited. Next was *parikramā* of the deities, performed four times accompanied by *kīrtana,* which would continue briefly after the circumambulations and often was Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's composition beginning *bhaja re bhaja re āmāra mana ati manda* or other songs.* Next was *tulasī-ārati,* performed along with the chanting of Śrī Candraśekhara Kavi's orison that begins *namo namaḥ tulasi mahārāṇī.*

A light breakfast of *mahā-prasāda* was served between approximately seven o' clock and eight, although many devotees skipped this. By seven-thirty most went out for *bhikṣā,* returning around noon, while others remained behind to perform other services. While *bhoga* was being offered at midday, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *kīrtana* "Bhoga-ārati" would be sung, and during the *ārati* that followed, his "Yaśomatī-nandana." Then the deities' altar was closed for Their midday rest, whereupon the devotees together honored a full meal of *mahā-prasāda,* the serving and honoring of which Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī sometimes personally supervised.

Each afternoon, from approximately two o'clock till three, *maṭha-vāsīs* assembled for *iṣṭa-goṣṭhī,* which opened with Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's song that begins *jaya jaya harināma cid-ānandāmṛta-dhāma,* from *Śrī Nāmāṣṭaka,* a composition in praise of the holy name. Next was a question-and-answer session to help devotees enter more deeply into understanding of

bhakti-siddhānta, especially as applicable in the preaching field. When going for *bhikṣā,* if devotees were stumped by queries or challenges, they would promise to return the next day with answers given by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, Śrīmat Tīrtha Mahārāja, or other sannyasis and senior devotees. In these meetings the devotees also discussed philosophical books, notably Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *Śrī Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta* and *Jaiva Dharma.*

After dark, *maṭha-vāsīs* were required to remain within the compound, as per the Vedic injunction for *brahmacārīs* residing at *gurukula.* They would attend the evening *ārati,* during which were sung two *ārati kīrtanas* of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura—those beginning *jaya jaya gorācāndera āratiko śobhā* and *jaya jaya rādhā-kṛṣṇa yugala-milana*—followed by the chanting of *śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu nityānanda śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda* and the *mahā-mantra.* After *ārati* came *jaya-dhvani, parikramā,* and *kīrtana* performed while sitting. Then Hari-*kathā* was given by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura or some other leading devotee. This evening program also attracted visitors and local *gṛhastha* disciples.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī instructed that all devotees—*brahmacārīs, gṛhasthas,* and sannyasis—even if they happened to miss other functions, should attend the morning and evening *āratis,* for they incorporate several essential *bhakty-aṅgas* (limbs of devotion).

Observing the *śāstrīya* rule that proscribes eating in the evening before deities have been put to rest, at about nine o'clock devotees again honored *mahā-prasāda,* most taking full meals.

Maṭha Standards

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī took much risk in establishing the Gauḍīya Maṭhas, not as hermitages but as well-appointed interfaces between sadhus and the world. Proximity and accessibility to worldly people was meant to expose them to the saintly life, but it also exposed saintly persons to the temptations of worldly life, and to the scrutiny of discerning people who were liable to misunderstand them as hypocritical enjoyers of the facilities at their disposal. While targeting the religious brigandry of persons lacking rectitude, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was concerned that his own Maṭhas not sink into moral paucity or self-contented laxity and thus become another edition of the vile *ākhḍās* of those salacious pseudo-devotees who had marred the name of Vaiṣṇavism. Thus he strove to preserve the uprightness of Gauḍīya Maṭha sadhus—that they actually be saintly and detached—for both their spiritual lives and the reputation of the institution hinged on it.

The asceticism implicit in the character of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura shaped standards for Maṭha life. He warned, "As dalliance in bodily comfort increases, proportionately the spirit of service to the Lord wanes," and thus wanted *maṭha-vāsīs* to live simply amidst plenty, strictly observe rules of devotional life, and unhesitatingly perform any service required of them.

Like most people in India at that time, generally Gauḍīya Maṭha *brahmacārīs* did not wear shoes. In eating, sleeping, traveling, and all other aspects of life they were expected to be content with the bare minimum. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī severely reproved any disciple who was becoming overweight, which often prompted the devotee thus criticized to fast until instructed to resume eating. This life of dedication was meant for satisfying the Lord of the Gauḍīyas:

> *mahāprabhura bhakta-gaṇera vairāgya pradhāna*
> *yāhā dekhi' prīta hana gaura-bhagavān*
>
> Renunciation is the basic principle sustaining the lives of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's devotees. Seeing this renunciation, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, becomes pleased. (Cc 3.6.220)

This verse, especially the first line, was often quoted by *maṭha-vāsīs* to help fortify their commitment or to caution a comrade slipping from the ideal.

Although by the principle of *yukta-vairāgya* devotees could employ opulence in service to the Lord, nothing was meant for personal indulgence. The apparent comforts accepted by *maṭha-vāsīs,* while atypical for sadhus, were hardly luxuries. Yet when Praṇavānanda Brahmacārī's sister first visited him at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, she scolded him for having a bed and mosquito net. These were simply for preserving health, the bed being just some rude boards nailed together, but according to conventional understanding even that was unsuitable for a sadhu, whose duty was to rest only on the floor, using at most a thin mat and minimal bedding.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura reprobated excessive endeavors for material self-improvement such as studying to become a great *paṇḍita* or performing much physical exercise. Rather, *maṭha-vāsīs* were expected to engage from early morning till night in the sixty-four items of *sādhana-bhakti:* hearing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* performing *kīrtana, arcana, parikramā* of the temple, and *sevā,* and so forth.

Red cloth was to be donned only by sannyasis and those *brahmacārīs* committed to remaining celibate, and normally was not given to the latter until some years after *dīkṣā.* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would decide which *brahmacārīs* were eligible for such a difficult undertaking, and in a formal ceremony he or a senior devotee would induct them into wearing red (although their bead bags would remain white, as was Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's). Red attire, being indicative of renunciation, was especially meant for preaching, to engender the natural respect accorded to renunciants that helped in communicating their message. Yet several *brahmacārīs* and *vānaprasthas* who were regarded eligible for red cloth chose to remain in white, either due to involvement in management, for which red garb was deemed somewhat inappropriate, or out of personal desire to maintain a modest profile.

Unless ordered to don secular clothing for a specific preaching purpose, every *maṭha-vāsī* was expected to maintain traditional Vaiṣṇava appearance at all times, with *tulasī* neckbeads and clearly visible *tilaka.* Face and head were to be shaved at least once a month, with a *śikhā* retained. *Brahmacārīs* and sannyasis who went outside for preaching usually shaved more often, following the example of their guru-*mahārāja,* who generally kept his face clean-shaven and had his scalp shaved monthly on Pūrṇimā. In accordance with *śāstra,* he and other *maṭha-vāsīs* avoided shaving on the specific days cited in *śāstra* as inauspicious for so doing.[*]

Yet for some *maṭha-vāsīs,* adhering to the strict regime was a struggle. Unable to give up his old habit, one *maṭha-vāsī* would sneak out to the Bāg-bazar Canal and smoke bidis (but inevitably would get caught).

And some leading *maṭha-vāsīs* preferred to maintain slick locks, neatly oiled and combed. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura never corrected them for that, but if other disciples raised the subject he would remark, "They are *babu brahmacārīs.*"[†]

Dynamism of the Maṭhas

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was the first Gauḍīya *ācārya* to establish *maṭhas* along the lines of those founded by *ācāryas* Śaṅkara and Madhva, as monastic seminaries with emphasis on scriptural training, and also incorporating deity service. He exhorted *maṭha-vāsīs* to take advantage of their good fortune, quoting *maṭhanti vasanti yatra paramārtha-śikṣārthinaḥ iti maṭhaḥ:* "*Maṭha* means a place wherein reside persons desirous to learn the ultimate purpose of life." He also wrote, *śikṣā-mandirera nāma maṭha:* "A temple of instruction is called a *maṭha*."[10] He gave the analogy of the "Gauḍīya Hospital," wherein *harināma* was the medicine and *mahā-prasāda* the diet, and whose inmates were both to undergo and administer treatment.

These Maṭhas were not mere residential colleges or spiritual sanatoriums, but dynamic preaching bases formed in pursuance of a dictum of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's own coinage that he frequently quoted—*prāṇa āche tāṅra sei hetu pracāra:* "One who has life can preach."[11] He expected *maṭha-vāsīs* to be surrendered, dedicated, and detached, joining him in sacrificing their soul for establishing and spreading the mission. He did not want to be surrounded by obsessive sycophants, flaccid sentimentalists, or sluggish procrastinators, nor to produce the kind of sedentary sadhus who for fear of *māyā* retreat to mountain caves. He considered it insufficient that his disciples be cherubic sadhus or mere *paṇḍitas* or content simply with *arcana.* He wanted men of backbone, active preachers like himself, ready to give their lives for propagating *śuddha-bhakti.* He declared, "I wish that every selfless tenderhearted member of the Gauḍīya Maṭha be prepared to shed two hundred gallons of blood for the nourishment of the spiritual body of every individual in human society."[12*] To recruit and train men of such caliber, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura persisted in speaking and writing, untiringly presenting scriptural conclusions hour upon hour, day after day.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī detested idleness, caprice, or lack of commitment. Intolerant of careless or slipshod attempts at service, he unceasingly pushed his disciples to surrender to Kṛṣṇa at every moment, by keeping them engaged in service and thus detached from material enjoyment. Comparing torpidity to dreaming of riches while lazing under a torn and tattered quilt, he exhorted his followers to be industrious and do something meaningful for the mission. He would refer to a shirker as a *maṭhua* (Oriya for "*maṭha* resident"), a common scurrility for loafers, with the insinuation that *maṭha* inmates are a class of perennially languorous do-nothings. He also spoke of *maṭha-medhīs,* a play on the word *gṛhamedhī* (envious *gṛhastha*), thus indicating one who lives in a monastery yet maintains the mentality of a householder.[*]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would keep his disciples busy in diverse services—*arcana,* cooking, cleaning, typesetting, lecturing, writing, soliciting funds—all for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa. The Maṭha atmosphere was palpably focused and disciplined, with no room for indolence or complacency. *Maṭha-vāsīs* slept meagerly, rarely over four hours. All were carried along by the spiritual energy emanating from Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who expressed his satisfaction with his disciples thus:

> Because Śrīman Mahāprabhu is extremely merciful, even in a place like Calcutta He has kept many devotees. At the Gauḍīya Maṭha there is always Hari-*kathā,* and everyone there is ever intoxicated with Hari-*sevā.* By the Supreme Lord's mercy, I see in all the Maṭhas the inclination to serve the Lord, and I ponder Mahāprabhu's mercy. How I was previously passing my life enjoying material pleasures! But wherever I go today, I am granted the association of devotees and opportunity for devotional service.[13]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's general instruction to *maṭha-vāsīs* was to daily go for *bhikṣā* for a minimum of half an hour and visit at least five houses. He would say, "Go and repeat the message of Kṛṣṇa, and while speaking, also hear it yourself and thus become purified. Even if no one gives anything, at least people will see you and be reminded of our mission." But devotees with specialized engagements, particularly deity service, cooking, or publication work, were not required to go out.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura did not underplay the challenges of preaching. He likened dissemination of Lord Caitanya's mercy to free distribution of first-class mangos, which would find few willing takers and more likely invite suspicion and skepticism. He said that the genuine speaker of Hari-*kathā* will certainly be severely mistreated by materialists or sometimes even by demigods. Nor did he uphold the artificial distinction generally made by Vaiṣṇavas between *bhajana* and *pracāra.* Rather, he stated that *pracāra* is the natural *kīrtana* of *siddhas* and is essential to the *sādhana* of *sādhakas,* because "if we enjoy nice fruit but don't desire to share it with others, then our own stock will decrease—for seeing our stinginess, the original source will cut our supply."[14] He declared, *jīvera viparīta ruci parivartana karāi sarvāpekṣā dayāmaya gaṇera ekmātra kartavya:* "The only duty of all merciful persons is to transform the contrary inclination of conditioned souls."[15] To effect this, he wanted to create *goṣṭhyānandīs,* preachers who cooperate within Lord Caitanya's mission for increasing the number of devotees.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī did not approve of disciples giving up preaching to practice *nirjana-bhajana* in imitation of exalted *bhajanānandīs.* He posed, "Which place is *nirjana*? Wherever I go I carry my mental filth with me."[16] In "Vaiṣṇava Ke?" (Who is a Vaiṣṇava?) he rhetorically asked:

> *duṣṭa mana! tumi kisera vaiṣṇava?*
> *pratiṣṭhāra tare, nirjanera ghare,*
> *tava harināma kevala kaitava*
>
> Wicked mind! What kind of Vaiṣṇava are you? Your show of chanting *harināma* in a solitary place is for false prestige—simply hypocrisy.

Therein he further exhorted devotees to preach, pointing out how the *nirjana-bhajana* of inconsummate devotees is conducted for prestige, and that rather than adopting false renunciation they should broadcast *śuddha-bhakti* by utilizing *yukta-vairāgya.*[*]

That Gauḍīya Maṭha men unrelentingly preached to attempt others' uplift, yet in a manner

certain to be often unpopular, was cited by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī as indicative of their not desiring *pratiṣṭhā*.[17] He averred that individuals who sit quietly making a show of *nirjana-bhajana* will not become objects of shafts, but of praise, while those who unreservedly preach will not be popular, but subject to retribution and aggression.[18]

His Maṭhas were not meant to be bland retirement homes for a few inmates to beg rice, cook, eat, and then sleep. He was firmly opposed to constructing temples in quiet places for leading a passive life, but instead stressed the need for potent outlets in the heart of cities for spreading Lord Caitanya's teachings to the greatest number of people. When once asked, "Why are you establishing *maṭhas* amid the bustle of towns, since usually temples are built on hillsides or in undisturbed cloistered spots?" Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī answered, "I am not a *bhajanānandī.* I have come to cities so that the inhabitants thereof may have the opportunity to hear Hari-*kathā*." And when a Gujarati admirer offered to build him a temple in Ville Parle, a quiet village near Bombay, he immediately refused.[*]

When some of his preachers returned from a scheduled meeting and reported that no one had come, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī replied, "Don't be discouraged. It doesn't matter if no one cares to hear. Speak anyway. At least the four walls will hear." Indeed his disciples soon found no reason to be disappointed, for with many going daily door to door, their message gradually gained wide appreciation.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī repeatedly stressed the importance of hearing and chanting. He wanted the Gauḍīya Maṭhas to be temples of continuous *kīrtana*—not only singing, but discoursing on topics of Hari, studying scripture, typesetting and printing, and going out to preach and distribute books and magazines. He desired that one way or another his followers always be busy in *kīrtana* and thus become purified:

> A *maṭha* surcharged with talk of Kṛṣṇa's glories and service is nondifferent from Vaikuṇṭha. Therefore *maṭha-vāsa* is *dhāma-vāsa*. Hari-*kathā* must be prominent in the *maṭha.* There is no use in constructing *maṭhas* merely to facilitate eating and sleeping. They need be built only for broadcasting Hari-*kathā,* which will benefit ourselves and others.[19]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was concerned that his disciples properly understand and be convinced o f *bhakti-siddhānta,* for without unshakable faith based on clear comprehension, they could neither advance in nor effectively propagate the devotional science. Within the Gauḍīya Maṭha he deliberately cultivated an ethos of high intellectualism based on the spiritual principle of satisfying Kṛṣṇa, distinct in essence from mundane scholarship. He specifically dubbed Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha at Bāg-bazar the *vāṇī-haṭṭa* (marketplace of spiritual instruction), just as Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had revealed Godruma as the headquarters of Nityānanda Prabhu's Nāma-haṭṭa.[20*] Thus the Gauḍīya Maṭhas came to be admired, even by ideological adversaries, as loci of elevated philosophical discourse.

The confidence radiating throughout the mission was upheld by the conviction that the

presentation of Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti* offered by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was wholly coherent with that given by Kṛṣṇa, Vyāsa, and all subsequent *ācāryas,* and that other expositions of Vedic philosophy were either less complete or deviant. Moreover, the effervescent ambiance of the Gauḍīya Maṭha was spurred by belief in Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's frequent statement that in the near future its message would prevail throughout the world. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī worked hard to fulfil this aim and expected his disciples to follow his example. Knowing well that increasing the number of disciples and Maṭhas would proportionately increase his anxiety, he willingly accepted that burden as unavoidable in his service to the *parampará,* and dispatched his men far and wide to promulgate Gauḍīya *siddhānta* door to door. Being empathic to the difficulties undertaken by his disciples, he himself traveled extensively to outlying Maṭhas—to give his personal association to encourage the men posted thereat and help boost their preaching efforts, and also to see that spiritual standards were maintained.

Often without giving prior notice, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would tell a disciple to go here or there to perform a particular task; and should that devotee ask for time to prepare his belongings, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would retort, "Your baggage will be sent after you. Go now." When a German devotee complained, "Prabhupāda, we are accustomed to planning our activities in advance, sometimes up to three months, so I need at least a week's notice to get ready," Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura responded, "I get information five minutes before, so how can I inform you a week ahead?"

Ten

On Tour

mahānta-svabhāva ei tārite pāmara
nija kārya nāhi tabu yāna tāra ghara

It is the nature of saintly people to deliver the fallen. Therefore they go to people's homes, although they have no personal business there. (Cc 2.8.39)

bhavad-vidhā bhāgavatās tīrtha-bhūtāḥ svayaṁ vibho
tīrthī-kurvanti tīrthāni svāntaḥ-sthena gadā-bhṛtā

Saints of your caliber are themselves places of pilgrimage. Because of their purity, they are constant companions of the Lord, and thus they can purify even the places of pilgrimage. (Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira to Vidura, SB 1.13.10)

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura set the pace in the preaching fight by leading from the vanguard. Following in the footsteps of *ācāryas* Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Madhva, and Caitanya Mahāprabhu, he undertook expeditions throughout the provinces of Bhārata-varṣa. Based in Bengal and Orissa, particularly Calcutta, Māyāpur, and Purī, he journeyed widely, combining formal and informal preaching with pilgrimage, research, and side trips to places of general interest. As he noted, "We go to Calcutta, Madras, Shillong, Mussoorie, Delhi, Lucknow, Dacca, even village to village, introducing this message. What is the need for us to move around like world travelers, from Kanyākumārī to Himācala? Just to fulfil Mahāprabhu's prediction."

The railway network developed by the British afforded unprecedented opportunities for widespread propagation all over the vast subcontinent, and Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was among the first sadhus to realize its potential, both by personal touring and by dispatching disciples on similar sorties. During the early days of the mission he rode mostly in third class, but after the Gauḍīya Maṭha was well established, in first class. Like Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would go to the station thirty minutes to an hour before the scheduled departure. He never journeyed alone, but usually with a group of devotees, taking along *mṛdaṅgas, karatālas,* books, cooking utensils, and other paraphernalia. Sajjana Mahārāja and leaders like Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu would accompany him in first class, while others rode in second or third class, according to their rank.[*]

In later years, after the number of his disciples had swelled, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's train journeys through Bengal and Orissa were regularly punctuated by receptions at several stations en route. Even in the middle of the night, devotees often enthusiastically assembled for a brief stoppage, and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would stand in the doorway of the carriage to meet them. Sometimes for daytime halts, a major welcoming ceremony would be organized with an exuberant *kīrtana* party and leading local citizens present to greet him. He

would deliver a short speech, thus prolonging the proceedings, but the railway staff and passengers rarely objected, for many of them also would become caught up in the devotional fervor. Such station receptions for prominent people were not uncommon, and it was widely accepted that all else could stop for the sake of religious expression. Particularly at Cuttack, where Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu would rally the numerous resident devotees for an especially rousing welcome, frequently Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's train would be delayed for a half hour or more.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura also went to uncounted places off the railway line, moving by car, horsecart, boat, palanquin, or foot. Journeys were often grueling, as for instance when he and his ancillary disciples traversed many miles of rough tracks across densely forested hills to reach the remote Śiva temple at Mallikārjuna-tīrtha.[†] On his travels he delivered formal lectures, discussed with scholars, visited religious and secular places of interest, became acquainted with local history, geography, socio-economics, and especially religious and social customs, and in some places investigated the feasibility of establishing a new Maṭha.

He often preached in villages, which in those days lacked urban amenities such as electricity, streetlights, paved roads, mechanized transport, and contemporary education, yet wherein groups of cultured and scholarly persons, mostly *smārta-brāhmaṇas* of traditional schooling, lived harmoniously with earthy rustics. Being less sophisticated than city dwellers, Indian villagers tended to be more religious and enthusiastic to receive sadhus, and were delighted to have *darśana* of such an exalted saint. Throngs of people would converge on him, eager to touch his feet. Sometimes they became so wildly excited that his disciples would encircle Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to prevent the crowds from jostling him or touching his feet.

Especially in early life, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī regularly visited his family estate in Chotimangalpur, Orissa, which had been wholly bequeathed upon him by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.[*] The first landlord had been Śrī Kṛṣṇānanda Datta, a devotee of Nityānanda Prabhu. While staying there, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī collected rental dues and worshiped the family deities of Jagannātha and *śālagrāma-śilā*.[†] In accord with the proscription that sannyasis cannot enter their father's home, after accepting *sannyāsa* he would stay in the *daśerā-maṇḍapa* (pavilion for worship of Durgā), and pace to and fro chanting *japa* in the large open space in front of the house.[‡]

Purī, 1918

On 10 June 1918, accompanied by twenty-three disciples, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī set out for Purī on his first pilgrimage cum preaching tour after accepting *sannyāsa.* The first stop was at Siuri Prapannāśrama, and next at the remote settlement of Kuamara, Mayurbhanj, on the invitation of the headmaster of the local junior school, who had received *harināma* from Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. The party was met outside the township by an exuberant *kīrtana* group of over one hundred members. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī inaugurated another Bhaktivinoda Āsana in Kuamara.

After two days, they set out for Remuṇā. The fourteen-mile trek over hilly forest terrain was made even more cumbersome by the new monsoonal rains, which apart from intermittently soaking the wayfarers, had also created thick mud, slippery paths, and innumerable unbridged rivulets. Undeterred, the devotees chanted as they trudged along. On their arrival, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and his cortege were joyfully greeted by the inhabitants of Remuṇā, headed by the proprietor of the famous Kṣīra-corā Gopīnātha temple, and provided lodging. But the only food available was coarse flat-rice and gritty molasses, which the party washed as well as possible, offered to the Lord, and then honored as *prasāda.* After being shown the important sites in the area and attending the *ārati* of Gopīnātha, later that evening the group finally received full plates of *mahā-prasāda,* including the famous *kṣīra* offered to Gopīnātha.[*]

The next day, 17 June, the contingent hiked six miles farther to Balasore, where they were welcomed by the subdivisional magistrate, Rāya Saheb Gaura-Śyāma Mahānti, and other distinguished persons of the town. Preparations for their stay and preaching had been made by Śrī Nitya-sakhā Mukhopādhyāya, who ostensibly was a follower of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Nitya-sakhā was known as a lover of literature and a competent writer; many of his articles had been featured in *Sajjana-toṣaṇī.* An enthusiastic host, he had scheduled a *yātrā* performance at his home as part of the festival occasioned by this visit of a Vaiṣṇava *ācārya.*[†] Nitya-sakhā Babu repeatedly entreated Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to attend, insisting that no devotee would object to such a sacred religious function. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura responded, "Truly spiritual sounds cannot issue from the mouths of those who have not sincerely taken shelter at the lotus feet of a bona fide guru, nor from those whose every endeavor is not for the transcendental sense pleasure of the Absolute Truth. By satisfying the senses of envious nondevotees, pretenders may gain a modicum of petty fame and thus feel their own senses gratified, but all this has nothing to do with *śuddha-bhakti,* which is based on the genuine attempt to realize the teachings of an authorized guru. We don't want *yātrā* Caitanya—we want real Caitanya."

Further indication of Nitya-sakhā Babu's deviant tendencies came at mealtimes, when the Gauḍīya Maṭha devotees witnessed him and a friend pushing into each other's mouth morsels of food from their own plate—a practice typical of *prākṛta-sahajiyās*.

On 19 June, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī addressed an extensive gathering convened in a

park by the local Hari-bhakti-pradāyinī Sabhā. He spoke on Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *Śikṣāṣṭaka* and dilated on *śuddha-nāma, nāmābhāsa,* and *nāmāparādha.* As usual at such programs, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī also had some of his disciples lecture and perform *kīrtana.* Afterward the organizers requested the party to take the donations that had accumulated on a large plate at the front of the podium, but Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī told his disciples to politely decline, lest they be seen as having accepted payment for *kīrtana.* This meeting was attended by all the important people of the town, many of whom visited Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī for personal audience and spiritual guidance during his stay, and later assembled at the railway station to see him off.

While in Balasore, upon seeing a beautiful young boy Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura became overwhelmed with love of Kṛṣṇa, just as Lord Caitanya had upon seeing an adolescent prince. Gradually restraining his ecstasy, he recited the verses of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* describing that pastime:

> The prince, just entering upon his youth, was very beautiful. He was blackish in complexion and had large lotus eyes. He was dressed in yellow cloth and there were jeweled ornaments decorating his body. Therefore anyone who saw him would recall Lord Kṛṣṇa. Seeing the boy, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu immediately remembered Kṛṣṇa. Meeting the boy in ecstatic love the Lord said, "Here is a great devotee. Upon seeing him everyone can remember the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, the son of Mahārāja Nanda." (Cc 2.12.58–61)

While proceeding by train to Cuttack, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura saw a herd of calves grazing at the foot of the Nilagiri Hills. As he often did when beholding pastoral or sylvan scenes, he recited:

> *vana dekhi' bhrama haya—ei 'vṛndāvana'*
> *śaila dekhi' mane haya—ei 'govardhana'*
>
> *yāhāṅ nadī dekhe tāhāṅ mānaye—'kālindī'*
> *mahā-premāveśe nāce prabhu paḍe kāndi'*
>
> Observing the forest, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu took it to be Vṛndāvana. He considered every hill Govardhana, and every river the Yamunā. In overwhelming ecstatic love, He danced and fell down crying. (Cc 2.17.55–56)

Then he quoted *yāṅhā yāṅhā netra paḍe tāṅhā kṛṣṇa sphure*—"Wherever the eyes fall, Kṛṣṇa becomes manifest" (Cc 1.4.85)—indicating that a *mahā-bhāgavata* sees Kṛṣṇa everywhere. He explained that everything is related to Kṛṣṇa and is meant for His service, and that through this pastime Lord Caitanya demonstrated how upon seeing any object a devotee remembers Kṛṣṇa; instead of trying to enjoy the beheld items, the devotee regards all that he sees, and indeed everything in the world, as meant for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura stayed two days in Cuttack, honoring an invitation by Dewan Bāhādura Śrī Kṛṣṇa Mahāpātra to stay at his home and speak on the *Bhāgavatam*. Upon arriving at Bhubaneswar station on the morning of 22 June, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura led the party in offering *daṇḍavat* to Lord Śiva, the presiding deity of the city. He cited a verse addressing Lord Śiva as Gopīśvara and begging him for love of Kṛṣṇa. That morning the devotees visited the most important pilgrimage sites in Bhubaneswar, namely the temples of Ananta Vāsudeva and Liṅgarāja and the Bindu-sarovara lake. After honoring *mahā-prasāda* at midday, they boarded a train for Purī. En route, at Sākṣi-gopāla station Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura again led his party in offering *daṇḍavat,* this time toward the direction of the Sākṣi-gopāla temple.

Next day the devotees toured the main holy places of Purī while performing *saṅkīrtana,* finally arriving at the Siṁha-dvāra gate of the Jagannātha temple. Here Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī quoted a verse spoken by the *gopīs,* the inner significance of which is crucial for understanding Lord Caitanya's pastimes in Purī:

āhuś ca te nalina-nābha padāravindaṁ
yogeśvarair hṛdi vicintyam agādha-bodhaiḥ
saṁsāra-kūpa-patitottaraṇāvalambaṁ
gehaṁ juṣām api manasy udiyāt sadā naḥ

Dear Lord, whose navel is like a lotus flower, Your lotus feet are the only shelter for those who have fallen into the deep well of material existence. Your feet are worshiped and meditated upon by great mystic yogis and highly learned philosophers. We wish that these lotus feet be wakened also within our hearts, although we are only ordinary persons engaged in household affairs. (SB 10.82.48)

Singing this verse to the accompaniment of *mṛdaṅgas* and *karatālas,* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his followers circumambulated the Jagannātha temple. They also sang Bengali verses from *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* describing Caitanya Mahāprabhu speaking in the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī:

For most people, the mind and heart are one, yet because My mind is never separated from Vṛndāvana, I consider My mind one with Vṛndāvana. My mind is already Vṛndāvana, and since You like Vṛndāvana, will You kindly place Your lotus feet there? I would deem that to be Your full mercy. My dear Lord, please hear My true submission. My home is Vṛndāvana, and I wish Your association there. But if I do not get it, then it will be very difficult for Me to keep My life.

My dear Kṛṣṇa, formerly when You were staying in Mathurā, You sent Uddhava to teach Me speculative knowledge and mystic yoga. Now You Yourself are speaking the same thing, yet My mind does not accept it. There is no place in My mind for *jñāna-yoga* or *dhyāna-yoga.* Although You know Me very well, You are still instructing Me in *jñāna-yoga* and *dhyāna-yoga.* It is not right that You do so. I want to withdraw My

consciousness from You and engage it in material activities, but even though I try I cannot do so. I am naturally inclined to You only. Your instructions for Me to meditate on You are therefore simply ludicrous. In this way You are killing Me.

It is not very good that You think Me to be a candidate for Your instructions. The *gopīs* are not like mystic yogis; they will never be satisfied simply by meditating on Your lotus feet and imitating so-called yogis. Teaching the *gopīs* about meditation is another kind of duplicity. When they are instructed to undergo mystic yoga practice, they are not at all satisfied. On the contrary, they become more angry with You.

The *gopīs* have fallen into the expansive ocean of separation and are being devoured by the *timiṅgila* fish of their ambition to serve You. Because they are pure devotees, they are to be delivered from the mouth of this *timiṅgila* fish. Since they have no material conception of life, why should they aspire for liberation? The *gopīs* do not want the kind of liberation desired by yogis and *jñānīs,* for they are already liberated from the ocean of mundane existence.

It is amazing that You have forgotten the land of Vṛndāvana. And how is it that You have forgotten Your father, mother, and friends? How have You forgotten Govardhana, the bank of the Yamunā, and the forest where You enjoyed *rāsa-līlā*? Kṛṣṇa, You are certainly a refined gentleman with all good qualities. You are well-behaved, softhearted, and merciful. I know that there is not even a tinge of fault to be found in You, yet Your mind does not even remember the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana. This is only My misfortune and nothing else.

I do not care for My personal unhappiness, but when I see the morose face of Your mother Yaśodā, and the hearts of all the residents of Vṛndāvana breaking because of You, I wonder whether You want to kill them all. Is it that You want to enliven them by coming there? Why are You simply keeping them alive in a state of suffering? The inhabitants of Vṛndāvana do not want You dressed like a prince, nor do they want You to associate with great warriors in a different country. They cannot leave the land of Vṛndāvana, and without Your presence they are dying. What will be their condition? My dear Kṛṣṇa, You are the life and soul of Vṛndāvana-*dhāma.* You are especially the life of Nanda Mahārāja. You are the only opulence in the land of Vṛndāvana; and You are very merciful. Come and let the residents of Vṛndāvana live. Kindly keep Your lotus feet again in Vṛndāvana. (Cc 2.13.137–47)

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura stated that arousal of such feelings is the actual method of worship for Gauḍīyas.

After circumambulating the temple, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his retinue entered. First they took *darśana* of Lord Caitanya's footprints and offered *daṇḍavat* to them. After taking *darśana* of Lord Jagannātha from behind the Garuḍa-*stambha,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī recited:

bhuvaṁ siñcann aśru-śrutibhir abhitaḥ sāndra-pulakaiḥ
parītāṅgo nīpa-stabaka-nava-kiñjalka-jayibhiḥ
ghana-sveda-stoma-stimita-tanur utkīrtana-sukhī
sa caitanyaḥ kiṁ me punar api dṛśor yāsyati padam

While chanting the holy names, Caitanya Mahāprabhu became joyful and sprinkled the earth with showers of tears. All the hairs of His body, standing on end, appeared like the beautiful filaments of fresh *kadamba* blossoms, and His body glistened with perspiration. Will He again become visible before the path of my eyes?[1]

In explanation, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī described that when Lord Caitanya in the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī meeting Kṛṣṇa at Kurukṣetra had *darśana* of Lord Jagannātha, the tears of love that burst forth from His eyes filled the drain behind the Garuḍa-*stambha*.[2]

The next day was Snāna-yātrā, the festival of bathing Lord Jagannātha. After observing it, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura spent the next two weeks taking his party around Purī and neighboring holy places, illuminating the significance of the various sites and as usual continuing to glorify Kṛṣṇa wherever he went. The largest of several preaching functions was held at the estate of a prominent gentleman, during which Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura expounded the difference between personal and impersonal conceptions of the absolute.

On the day before Ratha-yātrā, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura read to his disciples the description of how Lord Caitanya would thoroughly clean the Guṇḍicā temple each year on this corresponding day. He explicated the internal meaning of this pastime: just as the Guṇḍicā temple must be cleansed immaculately to make it fit to receive the Lord, so must the heart of a devotee.[*] As had Lord Caitanya and His associates, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his retinue swept and washed the Guṇḍicā temple and adjacent Nṛsiṁha temple and then bathed in the nearby Indradyumna-sarovara. The next day they chanted in front of Jagannātha's cart, especially singing a verse that Lord Caitanya would recite during Ratha-yātrā:

sei ta parāṇa-nātha pāinu
yāhā lāgi' madana-dahane jhuri' genu

Now I have gained the Lord of My life, in the absence of whom I was being burned by Cupid and was withering away. (Cc 2.1.55, 2.13.113)

North India, 1926–27

After inaugurating the new marble temple of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha in November 1926, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī set out for a wide-ranging tour. He first went to the northwest—to Delhi, Multan, Rawalpindi, the ancient ruins of Takṣaśilā, Lahore, Srinagar, Jammu, Amritsar, Kurukṣetra, Naimiṣāraṇya, Muradabad, Sambhal, Haridwar, and Rishikesh.[†] At Sambhal, which he acknowledged as the site of the future appearance of Lord Viṣṇu's Kalki-avatar, he noted that despite British presence there, disturbances from Muslims had not completely ceased and most temples had been converted into mosques.[‡]

In Bombay, he was honored by the Vallabha *sampradāya mahānta* Śrī Gokulanātha Gosvāmī in an elaborate reception befitting a visiting *ācārya*. Stationing Śrīmad Bon Mahārāja there to carry forward the propaganda work, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and his party next voyaged by steamer five hundred miles down the coast to Uḍupī, and from there continued on to Mangalore, Trichinopoly, Śrīraṅgam, Madras, Vizagapattam, and back to Calcutta.

Starting in September 1927, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura sallied forth on another major tour in the central and western regions of North India, stopping first at Banaras. The *Harmonist* reported:

> With more than one hundred disciples and his beloved counterpart Śrīpāda Kuñja Bihārī Vidyābhūṣaṇa, the Paramahaṁsa Mahārāja visited Banaras in the middle of Āśvina (September–October). Every nook and corner of that ancient town began to be vibrated with the auspicious sound of *mṛdaṅga* and Hari-*kīrtana* for fifteen days continually. Lectures were daily delivered at the famous Daśāśvamedha-ghāṭa, where thousands of eager people, both local and visitors coming from different provinces of India, completely overcrowded the whole of the extensive space from top to the water-edge, and drank deep from the nectar flow of Hari-*kīrtana* coming out from the holy lips of *śuddha-bhaktas.* It was really a rare sight to witness how innumerable persons, young and old, ladies and gentlemen, dressed in different styles and costumes, would gather together and listen spellbound to the most enlightening delineations of *śuddha-bhaktas.* The exquisite elucidations of the abstruse questions of philosophy, in perfect harmony with all the *śāstras,* by the editor of the *Gauḍīya,* were listened with great profit by many; and the very charming speeches of the eloquent Śrīmad Svāmī Bhakti Hṛdaya Bon were highly inspiring to everyone present.
>
> Then came the memorable day, the second of October, when the charming holy images of Śrīman Mahāprabhu and Śrī Śrī Giridhārī-Gāndharvikā were for the first time installed at Banaras in the Sanātana Gauḍīya Maṭha, with a solemn ceremony amidst shouts of cheer from the attending people, with whom the whole of the temple premises was fully packed up. All were sumptuously treated to *mahā-prasāda.* On 9 October, a special meeting of the leading elites of the town was held in the *maṭha* yard. Śrīla Paramahaṁsa Mahārāja delivered a long lecture dwelling on the superiority of the teachings of Mahāprabhu. Some respectable citizens kindly formed themselves in a body to devise ways and means for

translating all the treatises on Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism in Hindi, and for preaching the teachings of Śrī Mahāprabhu throughout the United Provinces.

After two full weeks the whole party of disciples at Banaras was divided into two batches: one, comprising fifteen heads, started for Cawnpore with the Paramahaṁsa Gosvāmī Mahārāja; and the other, with the rest, proceeded to Vṛndāvana to perform the annual celebration there in the Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Math. The former party was most cordially received at Cawnpore by Śrīpāda Adhokṣaja dāsa Adhikārī, who is a high government official there. Words fail to express adequately the whole-hearted hospitality rendered by Adhokṣaja Prabhu and his ever-increasing eagerness to serve his *śrī-gurudeva* and his associates. Here many respectable people came to have a *darśana* of Śrīla Paramahaṁsa Gosvāmī Mahārāja from morning till late at night.

Among the visitors there were also some skeptics and pedants who wanted to make a parade of their knowledge of rationalistic philosophy; but very soon their shallow knowledge was clearly exposed and their flimsy arguments dashed to pieces against the sound and invincible reasoning of *śrauta-panthā.* The Paramahaṁsa Gosvāmī Mahārāja convinced all his visitors of the unquestionable superiority of *nāma-bhajana* to all other means of God realization. On 14 October, the Gosvāmī Mahārāja with a party of his disciples started for Jaypur, while Svāmīji Śrīmad Bhakti Sarvasva Giri and Śrījut Jadunandana dāsa Adhikārī remained at Cawnpore for more than a week, and throughout the large commercial city of Cawnpore preached both in Hindi and in English the teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu on the cult of *śuddha-bhakti.* The whole city was on a stir, and the people were struck with admiration to hear for the first time the lofty teachings of Śrī Gaurasundara from the lips of erudite and eloquent preachers.[3]

Arriving at Jaypur railway station in the early morning, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and followers were met with offerings of flower garlands presented by a group of local gentlemen and the party headed by Śrīmad Bon Mahārāja, Śrī Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī, and Śrī Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu, which had gone ahead to make arrangements and do some preliminary preaching. In the afternoon Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura spoke on *nāma-tattva* at the house of the Maharaja of Jaypur. Afterward the court *paṇḍita,* Śrī Vijay Candraji, addressed the meeting in Sanskrit, saying, "I am an old man, so by now I have attended many scriptural meetings and studied many *śāstras*. But the realized and substantial conclusions I have heard today from this great personage have given me pleasure the like of which I had hitherto never experienced. Never before have I met such an eminent scholar of extraordinary learning, or such a pure Vaiṣṇava who is certainly an associated counterpart of God Himself."

Jaypur was an important provincial capital, and being the adopted home of several Vṛndāvana deities, also a pilgrimage venue for Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī visited the prominent sites there, beginning with nearby Galta Hill, in days of yore the site of the ashram of Gālava Muni, and more recently (eighteenth century) the venue of a famous debate between Gauḍīya-vedāntācārya Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa and *paṇḍitas* of the Śrī

sampradāya. From its summit Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and his disciples appreciated the view of the city below. He spent a full day at the library of the famous Śrī Rādhā-Govinda temple and had a list of its contents compiled, which included numerous parchments of handwritten Gauḍīya texts.

After taking *darśana* in all the Gauḍīya temples of Jaypur, the devotees left for Salimabad, the seat of one of the two major branches of the Nimbārka *sampradāya.* Detraining at Kishangarh in the evening and finding no other place to stay, they were forced to spend the night in the waiting room of the station. In the morning they hired two horsecarts to take them to Salimabad. The journey of only four miles was protracted by the exceedingly rough condition of the road, and with the sun scorching, no trees for shade along the way, no village to rest in, nor any water to drink, when they finally arrived at one o'clock they were hot, thirsty, hungry, and exhausted. But all toil was forgotten upon their receiving a respectful and joyous welcome by the *mahānta,* who lodged them in one of the several guesthouses of the temple and made all other necessary arrangements.

After the party had bathed, eaten, and rested, the *mahānta* personally brought them to the magnificent marble temple of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and to its adjoining library and other facilities. Conversing with Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in Sanskrit, he revealed that he knew little about the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* beyond whatever he had gleaned from reading a few Gosvāmī works. He then listened attentively as Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura expounded the Gauḍīya conclusion of *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva.* Despite the *mahānta's* request that they stay at least a week more, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his entourage left late that afternoon and reached Kishangarh well after sundown.

But the day's activities were not over. At the station, in response to the booking clerk's appreciative inquisitiveness about these Bengali sadhus, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura resumed the nigh incessant flow of Hari-*kathā* from his lotus mouth. On the morning of their departure, the clerk requested that they occasionally return to that region to again distribute the tender sweet loving *bhakti-rasa* of Gauḍa-*deśa.*

Next stop was Ajmer, where Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī addressed a meeting in the evening. The following morning he departed by car for the seven-mile trip over hills to Pushkar, a revered pilgrimage destination since the time of creation. On emerging from the car and offering *daṇḍavat* to this sacred region, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was immediately surrounded by *pāṇḍās* eager to show him around and collect ample remuneration. Giving each of them some baksheesh, he bade them adieu and appointed one local *brāhmaṇa* as a guide. But wherever he went in Pushkar he was continuously harassed by *pāṇḍās* wanting to lead him about. While there, he commented that Caitanya Mahāprabhu's teachings had not yet been preached in that area and that there was a pronounced need to do so. Having visited the three lakes and the temples of Brahmā and Sāvitrī, the principal holy spots of Pushkar, he returned at midday to the house in Ajmer where he was staying.

That afternoon and the following morning, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī visited the sights of

Ajmer, the most important being the famous *samādhis* of two Muslim saints, an ancient Jain temple, and a royal palace. Thereafter he delivered an arranged lecture, and in the evening, departed for a quick visit to Mount Abu—an ancient Hindu holy site better known for its architecturally superb Jain temples.

At Nathdwar, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was highly impressed and pleased by the opulent arrangements made for worshiping the presiding deity, Śrīnātha, whom he referred to as Gopāla, according to Gauḍīya usage. Here too, the resident Vallabha *sampradāya* dignitaries accorded him much respect. He appreciated the organization and opulence with which Śrīnātha was worshiped, noting the many *dharmaśālās* and the large library, and that there were fifteen hundred milk cows and three hundred armed guards for Śrīnātha's service. He was also happy to observe that the local *brāhmaṇas* personally, and with alacrity, performed services for the Lord, but he regretted their unquestioning commitment to the notion of caste determined by birth. Although he and his white-clad associates were freely allowed entrance to the temple, the other sannyasi in the party, Śrīmad Bon Mahārāja, was denied admission, apparently for fear that, invoking a longstanding assertion, he might claim the deity for the Gauḍīya *sampradāya.*

From Nathdwar the party left for Dvārakā, the place of Lord Kṛṣṇa's family residence five thousand years ago. Although the devotees arrived in mid-afternoon, it was evening before they finally found boarding—a derelict and slovenly *dharmaśālā,* which Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī declared unfit for human habitation and thus ordered that they return to the railway station, adjudging the waiting room better than the atrocious *dharmaśālā*. Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu went to hire a horsecart but returned with news that no drivers were willing to travel the considerable distance to the station at that late hour. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī urged him to try again. Vowing that it would be done, Kuñja Bihārī soon returned with an aged and wizened driver who took them not to the station but to a first-class *dharmaśālā* run by a Bengali from Calcutta, who was delighted to receive them. The famished devotees immediately began to cook, forgetting all about the horseman, and when they finally sought to pay him, he was gone. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī said the coachman should be rewarded well for having helped them so much. However, after scouring the whole area the next day, they learned nothing of his whereabouts—nor were the locals aware of any driver of such description.

After visiting the notable spots in Dvārakā, the group proceeded to explore holy sites further up the coast. When later repairing to the seashore to take a launch back to Dvārakā, the tide was in and they had to wade waist deep. The boatman spared Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura that inconvenience by carrying him on his shoulders, for which Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura begged forgiveness and gave him some baksheesh. On the vessel a local *brāhmaṇa* sang songs and displayed mystical tricks while the Bengali devotees cried out “Govinda! Govinda!” in alarm at the turbulence rocking the craft.

The following day began with the party making an extended hike along the beach to board a ship bound for Porbandar, where Sudāmā Vipra—a schoolmate and intimate friend of Śrī

Kṛṣṇa's—had resided. At the temple wherein a deity of Sudāmā Vipra was worshiped, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī described the glories of *sakhya-prema.* The next day was spent riding to Junagadh, a provincial locus of Śiva worship, situated at the base of sacred Girnar Hill. Arriving in the evening after two changes of train, the devotees set out to look for a *dharmaśālā,* but the only one available was run by Jains who, despite all pleas, flatly refused to accommodate Hindus. When it was explained to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura that their final recourse was to stay with *nāgas* (naked sadhus), he agreed. The *nāgas* turned out to be genial and accommodating. They made arrangements for cooking, provided Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura a hammock, and apprised him of places worth seeing in the locale.

Early next morning, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was carried by palanquin up the one thousand steps to the peak of Girnar Hill. He then ascended the nearby Gorakhnath Hill, stopping along the way at various Jain and demigod temples and bathing in a sacred lake. After resting that night in a gentleman's home, the party departed for Prabhas, the place of Lord Kṛṣṇa's disappearance from this world five thousand years before.

From there they journeyed more than a day to Ujjain, where they visited an ancient and important temple of Lord Śiva, and also the place where Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were schooled by Sāndīpani Muni. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura spoke to his companions about the Vaiṣṇava sannyasi from Avantīpura (the ancient name of Ujjain) and stated that it would be good if a *tridaṇḍī* ashram were established there in remembrance of that Avantī sannyasi.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī then traveled eight hundred miles north to the imperial capital, Delhi, where for the first time he introduced the Gauḍīya message on a wide scale, and then on to Vṛndāvana to celebrate the annual festival of the Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Maṭha there. His sannyasis preached throughout the small town to crowds of both domiciled and native residents, unequivocally stressing the importance of performing Hari-*bhakti* sincerely and without simultaneously practicing vice.[*]

Assam, 1928

During the rainy season in 1928, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī arrived with a group of disciples in Gauhati, Assam, and lodged at the home of a prominent lawyer. Next morning they went in the lawyer's car to visit the temple of Kāmākhyā-devī, a form of Kālī. The temple was four miles from the center of Gauhati, atop a hill overlooking the mighty river Brahmaputra. Being the site of Kālī's vagina, since time immemorial it had been a hub of tantra and black magic. The present temple had been inaugurated in 1565 by sacrificing 140 men to Kālī. Later the British curbed the extreme forms of religious perversity practiced there, but animal sacrifices were still common and meat and fish were offered daily.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura began the ascent, chanting *japa* and occasionally halting to rest. Now and then the accompanying devotees shouted, "*Jaya* Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga!" while pointing out to each other interesting sights from the idyllic scenery gradually unfolding below. As the group climbed up, several sadhus were coming down, each carrying human skulls and other insignias of their diabolic vocation. After passing the ten shrines for the ten energies of Durgā, the party finally reached the peak to behold the large and intricately ornamented temple of Kāmākhyā-devī—but it was closed. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī offered *daṇḍavat,* reciting from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* a verse spoken by the young unmarried *gopīs:*

> *kātyāyani mahā-māye mahā-yoginy adhīśvari*
> *nanda-gopa-sutaṁ devi patiṁ me kuru te namaḥ*
>
> O Kātyāyanī, O great potency of the Lord, O possessor of great mystic power and mighty controller of all! Please make the son of Nanda Mahārāja my husband. I offer homage to you. (SB 10.22.4)

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī explained to his disciples the mysteries of Godhead's energies: "Desiring to attain Kṛṣṇa, the *gopīs* worshiped Kātyāyanī. The Supreme Lord possesses all powers, and although His energy is one, it assumes various forms to execute different functions. As the internal energy Yoga-māyā protects surrendered devotees, the external energy Mahā-māyā bewilders souls inimical to Kṛṣṇa." He then had a disciple read a description of Mahā-māyā from Sanātana Gosvāmī's *Bṛhad-Bhāgavatāmṛta.*

On another day Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura took a seven-mile outing from Gauhati to Vasiṣṭha Muni's ashram, a place of pristine calm and natural splendor with an exceptionally beautiful waterfall. Then from Gauhati the devotees traversed the winding mountain roads up to Shillong —which receives more rain than almost anywhere else on earth, and nearly all during the four months of the monsoonal rains. Śrīpāda Bon Mahārāja had arranged accommodation in a picturesque cottage surrounded by verdant trees and shrubs, but the devotees were able to view the scenery only through incessant pounding downpour. Undaunted by the inclement weather, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura continued with his own characteristic shower of mellifluous Hari-*kathā.*

South India, 1930–31 and 1932

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī wanted to install 108 *pāda-pīṭhas* (replicas of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's footprints) at sacred locations that had been visited by the Lord, to create awareness of His having been there. But he was able to do so at only eight locations, five of them while touring South India in 1930.*

Advance parties were sent to arrange with local temple authorities for brief and modest installation programs. At each place, accompanied by a small party, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would install a stone imprint representing Mahāprabhu's feet by washing it with Gaṅgā water, performing *ārati,* reading from the relevant section of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* and performing *saṅkīrtana*. He would give the priests and temple managers funds for the construction of a simple shrine for the footprints, and within a day or two move on.

The expedition began on 23 December 1930, when the party proceeded from Calcutta to Jajpur, Orissa. There they installed Lord Caitanya's footprints near the river Vaitaraṇī. They also went to the temple of Ādi-Varāha, on the bank of the Vaitaraṇī. While crossing the river, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī commented, "To pass over the Vaitaraṇī means to leave the material habitat and enter Brahmaloka (the spiritual world)."† Lord Caitanya's grandfather, Upendra Miśra, was said to have hailed from Jajpur, and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and his troupe visited the inhabitants of that area who claimed descent from Lord Caitanya's family. On the night of 25 December they left from Jajpur station, at the periphery of thick jungle. When suddenly the sound of tigers was heard, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī asked, "Oh, are the tigers roaring?"

On 26 December the troupe arrived at Kūrmakṣetra, where the deity of Śrī Kūrma presides. In the evening, resident *brāhmaṇas* offered a ceremonial welcome, and after performing a *parikramā* of the temple, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura installed Lord Caitanya's footprints. Next the party established *pāda-pīṭhas* at Siṁhācalam (27 December), Kovvur (29 December), and Maṅgalagiri (31 December). At Kovvur, by consulting local people and the description in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* an advance party had approximately ascertained the site on the bank of the river Godāvarī at which Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu had first met and discussed with Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya. For establishing a *pāda-pīṭha* there, Śrīpāda Bon Mahārāja, the leader of the party, had selected a suitable plot, which the owner readily donated.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and company reached Madras on 2 January 1931. The *Harmonist* described much of the rest of the tour thus:

> After a stay of two days at Madras, His Divine Grace started for Trivandrum, visiting on the way the temples of Śrī Varadarāja at Viṣṇukāñcī, of Śrī Raṅganāthaji at Śrīraṅgam, and of Janārdana Viṣṇu at Varkala.* His Divine Grace reached Trivandrum on 7 January. He next visited Śrī Ananta Padmanābha and then proceeded to Tiruvattar, where he saw Śrī Ādi-keśava. Śrī Gaurasundara discovered the manuscript of the *Brahma-saṁhitā* at

this place. His Divine Grace visited Śrī Kanyākumārī on the ninth. This is the southernmost point of India, otherwise known as Cape Comorin. His Divine Grace returned to Trivandrum the same day and presided at a public lecture delivered in the local Jubilee Hall by His Holiness Śrīmad Bhakti Hṛdaya Bon Mahārāja of the Gauḍīya Mission. His Divine Grace returned to Calcutta on 14 January by way of Madras, where he presided at a second lecture by Swamiji Bon on the life and teachings of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, delivered at the local Mādhva Association. His Divine Grace had been pleased to visit the residence of Śrījut Rāmacandra Rao at the town of Rajahmundry, at his earnest prayer. This gentleman had made a free gift of some valuable lands at Kovvur for the erection of the shrine of the footprints of the Supreme Lord, in commemoration with His meeting with Rāya Rāmānanda at that place in 1510 A.D. His Divine Grace was hospitably received on behalf of the Travancore State and provided with a suitable residence during his short stay at Trivandrum, at the Padma Vilāsa Palace.[4]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura commented that the deity of Kanyākumārī, after which the township was named, resembled that of Caitanya Mahāprabhu at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, and that although Kanyākumārī was generally accepted to be Durgā prior to her marriage with Lord Śīva, Vaiṣṇavas consider her to be Lakṣmī, daughter of the ocean, on whose shore she resides. He said that just as Kurukṣetra is the place of the elder *gopīs,* Kanyākumārī is that of the unmarried *gopīs,* and here *vipralambha-bhāva* is triple that in Purī.[*]

After leading the Navadvīpa-dhāma Parikramā, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī remained in North India for almost a year before again heading for Madras (this time with twenty devotees), where he was accorded several formal receptions, the one conducted upon his arrival being unprecedented. Organized by members of the public in conjunction with the Municipal Corporation, it consisted of local traditional music parties, a brass band, *kīrtana* groups, a procession of Boy Scouts, and throngs of people, many waving flags and festoons and all straining to see and hear this extraordinary saint from Bengal. Thirty-two guns were fired in Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's honor, and troops led by Britishers were deployed to regulate the crowd. All the important newspapers of the city covered the reception and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's subsequent activities in Madras. On 11 January 1932, under the heading "Gauḍīya Maṭha Guru Mahārāja in Madras," the *Justice* reported:

> His Divine Grace Paramahaṁsa Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, the great Ācārya of the Gauḍīya cult and President of Śrī Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā, arrived in Madras yesterday by the Calcutta Mail.
>
> His Holiness's party consisted of about thirty persons and included the secretary of the said *sabhā;* his private secretary; the editor of the *Gauḍīya;* Prof. J. Dasadhikary, Bhakti-śāstrī; Prof. H.P. Mandal; and Mr. G.C. Deb, Retd. Deputy Supdt. of Allahabad.
>
> His Holiness was honored and garlanded on the way at Cuttack Station by the residents of the city, at Rajahmundry, Kovvur, and Basin Bridge.

At Central Station, His Divine Grace was received with shouts of glory by many eminent citizens, and the members of the Madras Gauḍīya Maṭha. As soon as the Svāmījī got down, B.H. Bon Mahārāja introduced to him the President of the Madras Corporation, T.S. Ramaswami Iyer; the Hon'ble Minister Mr P.T. Rajan; S.V. Ramaswami Mudaliar; the Hon'ble Dewan Bāhādura S.G. Narayanswami Chettiar, C.I.E.; and they garlanded the Svāmījī.

His Divine Grace got into the very beautifully decorated car, and in a huge *saṅkīrtana* procession consisting of *triḍaṇḍi-svāmīs, brahmacārīs,* gentries of the city, provincial scouts, several *kīrtana* parties, and the devotees from Calcutta, started from the front of the Madras Club and slowly proceeded to Gauḍīya Maṭha, Gopalapuram, passing through West Cott's Road, Woods Road, Rayapettah Bazar Road, Lloyd Road, and Corn Smith Road.

Besides the distinguished gentlemen who received the Gosvāmī Mahārāja at Central Station, the inhabitants of Rayapettah, Mylapure, and Gopalapuram received the great Ācārya at the corner of Pycrofts Road, and Hon'ble Minister Dewan Bāhādura S. Kumarswami Reddiar accompanied His Divine Grace to the Maṭha itself. The whole procession party with the Svāmījī Mahārāja got into the new site of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, and then again his car stopped at the gate of the house of his disciples at Lloyd Road, where His Divine Grace was duly honored by the whole family with *ārati,* etc.

The Guru Mahārāja alighted from the car, and was conducted to the decorated "Śrī Kṛṣṇa Hall" of the Maṭha, where Prof. L.N. Govindarajan of Loyola College, on behalf of the residents of Gopalapuram colony, read an address of homage to His Divine Grace.

The Hon'ble Minister Dewan Bāhādura S. Kumarswami Reddiar also addressed, on behalf of the greater population of the province, and paid homage to Paramahaṁsa Mahārāja. The Ācārya then gave a suitable and short reply to them.[5]

On 23 January, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura revealed the service of Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga–Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī in the Madras Gauḍīya Maṭha. On 27 January the governor of Madras Presidency, His Excellency Sir George Frederick Stanley, accompanied by his wife, Lady Beatrix, and his private and military secretaries, came to the Madras Gauḍīya Maṭha and laid the foundation stone for its Śrī Kṛṣṇa Kīrtana Hall. His Excellency observed:

In spite of the very short time in which the Mission has been established in Madras, it has obviously made great headway; it has attracted many influential men to its fold and has succeeded in finding a permanent site on which to expand. I wish to say what a great pleasure it is for me to meet today the spiritual head of the Mission, the President Ācārya, and I pray that his work and all the members of the Mission may be blessed by the divine grace which inspires them, and that they may ever progress toward their object of bringing peace to India and all mankind.[6]

Many South Indian Vaiṣṇava *brāhmaṇas,* themselves deeply learned in *śāstra,* highly regarded Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his disciples for their adherence to *śāstra* and spreading Viṣṇu-*bhakti*. Reciprocally, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his followers esteemed the numerous Vaiṣṇava *brāhmaṇas* in South India who strictly upheld their culture and principles.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura expressed a desire to preach extensively in South India, considering it a place of devotion due to the widespread influence of Rāmānujācārya and Madhvācārya. He appreciated the people's piety and their developed philosophical sense, but regretted the prevalence of monism. He wanted big Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava temples constructed there. He once said, "I will come again to pick up those disciples of mine who do not complete their *bhajana* and go back to Godhead. At that time I shall simultaneously fulfil my desire to preach in South India and Vṛndāvana, and will establish many *pāda-pīṭhas* of Caitanya Mahāprabhu." He said that in South India people know *arcana* but not *kīrtana,* and that they know Viṣṇu forms of the Lord such as Vāsudeva, Kūrma, Nṛsiṁha, and Nārāyaṇa, but not Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.[7] However, in a lecture given in Bengal he stated:

> The most merciful Śrī Caitanya-deva preached all over South India the glories of Rādhā-Govinda. Yet today the people there are in the same condition as before Śrīman Mahāprabhu came. Therefore it is again required to preach to South Indians, to revive their original consciousness, because they have completely forgotten whatever Śrīman Mahāprabhu had instructed. They say, "We are rational and intelligent men, not sentimental like Bengalis," but they have no interest to hear about Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda. When we installed the deity of Rādhā-Govinda in our Rāmānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha in South India, local people opposed us and placed so many obstacles. They wanted us to instead install the four-armed form of Lord Viṣṇu. The people of Madras are busy with discussions of Pārtha-sārathi and do not know about Rādhā-Govinda-*līlā*.[*] They are very unfortunate; they have no qualification to see the beautiful service of the Supreme Lord that was inaugurated in North India by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's associates the Six Gosvāmīs.[8]

While visiting Madras, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura gave insights into his vast knowledge of *śāstra* and Vedic culture by explaining to his disciples salient points about the dress of South Indian *brāhmaṇas,* who characteristically wore a *veṣṭi* as lower cloth, and a cotton wrap across the shoulders or tied at the waist, with the rest of the chest and back bare except for an *upavīta*.[†] He said that previously the *upavīta* was not used, only the dhoti and upper cloth, but later it became acceptable for *brāhmaṇas* to wear an *upavīta* instead of an upper cloth. When the Bengali devotees expressed surprise that South Indian *brāhmaṇīs* wore their saris with a *kaccha,* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura stated that this was the correct Vedic method.

After accepting Vyāsa-*pūjā* in Madras, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura headed back toward Bengal to attend the festival culminating on Gaura-*jayantī.* En route, he halted for another rousing reception, this time in Ellore, a town in the Madras Presidency. Led by zamindar Rao Bāhādura Mothi Gaṅgarāju, practically the entire populace feted the *ācārya* with a gala procession of

elephants, horses, a band, and hundreds carrying flags, festoons, and ceremonial spears. Seated in a lavishly bedecked horse-drawn coach, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura passed through packed streets under continuous showers of flowers. At the conclusion of the parade, he was accorded a highly enthusiastic reception by different religious associations, each presenting him with panegyrics and certificates of appreciation.

Shortly thereafter, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī again visited South India, stopping briefly in Madras before proceeding to Coimbatore and several other towns, eventually reaching the hill station Ootacamund, where he took relief from the heat of the plains. Remaining there over two months, he sometimes lectured but mostly concentrated on writing—revising Professor Sanyal's English book *Sree Krishna Chaitanya,* working on the English translation of *Brahma-saṁhitā,* completing his own *Gauḍīya-bhāṣya* on *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata,* and penning an English booklet about Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya. On the arrival of the cooling monsoonal rains he journeyed to Mysore, reaching there on 17 June 1932 to fulfil an invitation from the Maharaja of Mysore, Sir Kṛṣṇa Rājendra Udaiyar Bāhādura. The maharaja was well known as being, like his father before him, adept in both Eastern and Western philosophy and a liberal sponsor of Hindu causes, with particular admiration for the Ramakrishna Mission. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was honored as a state guest and lodged in the fabulous Rāma Palace. The maharaja arranged and attended public meetings at the palace, which featured speeches by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.

While in Mysore, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura pointed out that in the far west of Mysore District was situated Śṛṅgerī, where impersonalist Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya had established a *maṭha;* diametrically opposite, in the far east of the district at Mulbagal, a *maṭha* had been founded by Śrī Vādirāja of the Mādhva *sampradāya,* whose upholding of *śuddha-dvaita-siddhānta* directly opposed Śaṅkarācārya's teachings; and since Mysore city is exactly midway between the two locations, it is fitting to at this place present Lord Caitanya's *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva,* which being the midpoint of unqualified monism and unrelenting dualism, harmonized both stances, bringing to a perfect conclusion the strengths of both.

In an entry dated 21 June 1932 in the visitor's book of the maharaja's Sanskrit college, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī wrote:

> Visited H.H. Mahārāja's Sanskrit College on 20-6-32 and was very kindly received and shown over the premises by the worthy principal. We had a look at the famous collection of Sanskrit manuscripts and had a short talk with the professors of the college. We were impressed by the atmosphere of liberal all-round culture of the place and the cordiality of our reception by the instructional staff and students. We could not help feeling the absence of a chair of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* embodying the highest synthesis of religion in its comparative aspects.
>
> Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī
>
> Pātrarāja, Śrī Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā

Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, Śrī Māyāpur

Nadia, Bengal[*]

After ten days in Mysore the next stop was Trivandrum, where the Maharaja of Travancore also received Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his party as state guests. He personally guided Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura around the magnificent Ananta Padmanābha temple, and heard from him about the teachings of Lord Caitanya in relation to those of the Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* of South India.

Eleven

Chanting the Holy Names

> *Paraṁ vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam* (Glory to the congregational chanting of Kṛṣṇa's names!) is the Gauḍīya Maṭha's sole object of worship.[1]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was deeply attached to the holy names of Kṛṣṇa. Whenever devotees inquired how to improve their *bhakti* and overcome *anarthas,* he usually stressed the need to chant faithfully and offenselessly, quoting Lord Caitanya's statement *ihā haite sarva-siddhi haibe sabāra:* "By this alone all perfection will come."[2] He advised, "Chant the *mahā-mantra* loudly and with attachment. This will drive away inertia, worldly ills, and disturbances." He maintained that chanting the Lord's names is tantamount to directly seeing Him: "The Lord and His name are one and the same. Chanting the holy name is equivalent to directly experiencing Him."[3] He always emphasized *harināma* as the topmost *sādhana:*

> To make us wholly devoted to Kṛṣṇa's name, Śrī Gaurāṅgadeva, the combined form of Śrī Rādhā-Govinda, came to this world. But if we disregard His teachings and show no interest in *śrī-nāma-sevā,* we will never attain auspiciousness. *Śrī-nāma-saṅkīrtana* is the best *sādhana.* If other *sādhanas* help us in *kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana,* then they deserve to be called *sādhana;* otherwise they are simply impediments to *sādhana. Śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana* is the emperor of *sādhanas*. It is the only infallible *sādhana* capable of bringing us to *siddhi.* Śrīman Mahāprabhu did not speak of teaching *arcana,* but in *Śikṣāṣṭaka* he taught *nāma-bhajana.* Although in Kali-yuga other limbs of *bhakti* should be performed, they should be accompanied by *bhakti* denoted by *kīrtana.*[4]
>
> Kṛṣṇa and *kṛṣṇa-nāma* are not two entities. Kṛṣṇa is His holy name, and the holy name is Kṛṣṇa. *Kṛṣṇa-nāma* is the son of Nanda, Śyāmasundara. Our only devotional service and duty is *śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana.* This understanding is auspicious.[5]

A *paṇḍita* who apparently considered chanting *harināma* an elementary practice for neophyte spiritualists asked, "Why are you chanting *harināma* so much?" Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī replied with the exemplum that a young child first learns to write *a-b-c*. If when older he is writing *a-b-c* in an algebra equation, his grandmother may ask why he is still studying at the same level as when he was five years old. She does not see that what appears to be the same exercise is actually on a significantly higher platform.[6] Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī explained, "Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa is postgraduate dharma. Just as you never weary of calling your children's names every day, when we chant the names of Kṛṣṇa with love we don't become jaded. *Nāma-gāne sadā ruciḥ:* 'Devotees are characterized by unceasing taste for reciting the holy names.'[7] We want to chant more and more."[8]

Kīrtana

In the early days of the mission Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura occasionally led *kīrtana;* however, not being very musically adept, later on he did not lead *kīrtana* or play instruments but simply joined in singing with others. He would say, "If you don't know how to sing, open your lips anyway and recite the holy name. Even if you don't sing expertly, chanting the name is *kīrtana*." He spelled out the necessity and method of performing Hari-*kīrtana:*

> Hari-*kīrtana* is the perpetual and natural function of all the faculties of the *jīva* in the state of freedom from all affinities to this changeable world, because the Absolute Truth is identical with Hari. Hari has to be served exclusively, constantly, and by all faculties of the soul. The only function of the voice is to chant Hari-*kīrtana,* which is nondifferent and inseparabe from simultaneous service to Hari by all the other senses. One who does not employ his voice incessantly and exclusively in chanting Hari-*kīrtana* has no access to Hari-*sevā* by any other means. Therefore Hari-*kīrtana* must be chanted while being humbler than a blade of grass. There can be no streak of worldly vanity or seeking after any worldly advantage. The only object should be to please Hari.[9]

He insisted that *kīrtana* should not degenerate into an artistic show for sense gratification:

> *Kīrtana* performed for sensual satisfaction is not Hari-*kīrtana. Kīrtana* is not to be performed only through melodious musical tunes, chimes, and the like. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has not asked us to be proficient in high-class music and well practiced in the airs of accomplished musicians. He has asked us to always perform Hari-*kīrtana.* That which is meant for gratifying the mundane senses is not Hari-*kīrtana.* That by which Kṛṣṇa's senses are satisfied is Hari-*kīrtana*.[10]

Although many Bengalis and Oriyas were virtuoso singers and musicians, those who joined the Gauḍīya Maṭha were not encouraged to perform in the showy manner typical of mundane *kīrtanīyās.* Gauḍīya Maṭha *kīrtanas* were performed in distinctive Bengali style, yet in a relatively uncomplicated manner, sans much of the intricacy common in Bengali *kīrtana. Mṛdaṅgas* and *karatālas* were the principal instruments, with gongs and *jhampa* (big hand cymbals) also used, and especially in *kīrtanas* during *āratis* the temple bell was rung in time to the beat. Other instruments often used in Bengali *kīrtana,* such as harmonium, violin, and *esrāja* (a stringed instrument resembling a lute) were proscribed. But the *rāmaśiṁhā* (a long, brass horn) and large drums were sometimes played during festivals.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura did not approve that *khol* players simply become absorbed in pounding out elaborate beats and not also sing in *kīrtana,* and would instruct thus-erring disciples to join in the chanting.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura warned that ability to sing sweetly or to consummately play an instrument, or becoming highly learned or an attractive speaker, would tend to attract women

and prestige and thus could undermine a devotee's service mood or cause him to become victimized by praise and appreciation.* One of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's disciples had a natural fondness for performing *kīrtana,* but because his voice was nasal, gruff, and wholly unmusical he was often discouraged by his godbrothers, some of whom mocked his off-key croaking. Yet Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura encouraged him to go on singing. All the same, in one lecture he suggested that for the sake of attracting worldlings to Hari-*kathā, kīrtana* could be rendered in a sensually pleasing manner:

> *Kīrtana* means "a recitation that bestows eligibity to hear about spiritual subject matters," but at present we are so averse to the service of Bhagavān that we are not prepared to hear *kīrtana* unless it pleases our senses. That is why there is an arrangement to glorify Hari by melodious songs. For those who have no interest in hearing about Hari except in the form of songs, we sing the glories of Hari so that they receive the message, just as a bitter pill is coated with sugar.
>
> People have already made up their mind that they will hear anything but Hari-*kathā.* For their benefit we have to perform Hari-*kīrtana.* As mustard cake and salt is mixed with a cow's food when she does not want to eat, we mix pleasing songs with Hari-*kathā* so that it will be attractive to all. For this purpose, some hearing of songs about Rāi-Kānu [Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa] can be allowed, to engage people's propensity for hearing songs.
>
> *Kīrtana* is meant for attracting the audience toward hearing. Some may say that Kṛṣṇa is immoral or just another historical personality, "so what is the use of hearing about Him? We prefer to hear about the heroic activities of Napoleon." To relieve people from such a mentality Kṛṣṇa-*kīrtana* is necessary. As deer and snakes can be charmed by music and songs, if Hari-*kathā* is presented in the form of songs then even the minds of materialists will be attracted. Proper *kīrtana* means to reject dry, unauthorized, and adverse *kīrtana.*[11]

An incident in Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's childhood had much influenced his attitude toward *kīrtana* and music. He was with his father at Bhakti Bhavan when the brothers Dvijendranath and Rabindranath, sons of the famous spiritualist and philosopher Debendranath Tagore, a longstanding dear friend of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's, visited in 1881. At that time Rabindranath, who was barely twenty years old, recited a song about Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura later commented that his own strong indifference to hearing music became much reduced after experiencing Rabindranath's very sweet voice and lucid enunciation of each word. He said that in his early childhood he had heard many traditional *kīrtanīyās'* renderings of songs on Kṛṣṇa-*līlā* but found their pronunciation unclear, and was not impressed by their displays of musicianship in tune, measure, and rhythm. He was interested in the words of songs.[12]

A major element of traditional Bengali *kīrtana* is *ākharas,* added lines that are not part of the main composition but which elucidate or emphasize points in the song. For instance, in Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's "Gaura-ārati" the well-known *ākharas* are *gaurāṅgera āratika śobhā jaga-jana-mana-lobhā* and *śaṅkha bāje ghaṇṭā bāje madhura madhura madhura bāje.* In

several of his compositions Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had designated specific *ākharas* to be sung. Although *ākharas* may also be added arbitrarily or extemporaneously by the lead singer, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī did not approve of this, but recommended that devotees sing only original songs and *ākharas* given by Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*.

When proficient outside singers would come to a Gauḍīya Maṭha or to one of its public functions desiring to sing, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would have them chant *nāma-saṅkīrtana,* especially the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra.* He did not like that devotional compositions be sung by persons who did not follow regulative principles. He said that *kīrtana* is meant for Kṛṣṇa-*kīrti* (glorifying Kṛṣṇa), not as a recital for general entertainment.

Gauḍīya *kīrtana* tradition was replete with thousands of songs, mostly describing the forms, qualities, and pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, Gaurāṅga, and Their associates and intimate desires to serve them. Yet *kīrtana* within the Gauḍīya Maṭha consisted mainly of less esoteric compositions. Several songs of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura formed the basis of the Gauḍīya Maṭha liturgy, along with some by Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura and others.* Being preachers, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura had penned many songs meant to help devotees at the stage of *sādhana-bhakti* to systematically progress toward the perfectional stage of *prema.* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī deemed such compositions suitable for regular recital within the Gauḍīya Maṭha. Apart from those songs that comprised the daily liturgy, he often had disciples sing selections from Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura that vocalize sentiments and aspirations suitable for devotees in *sādhana-bhakti.* He stated that early morning chanting of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *kīrtana* beginning *bhaja re bhaja re āmāra mana ati manda* is commensurate to stomping the mind with shoes, and that devotees should always remember it to help them overcome the uncontrolled mind.

Among Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's confidential songs expressing devotion in the state of *sādhya,* two were stipulated for daily chanting by all disciples during *maṅgala-ārati* and *sandhyā-ārati,* respectively: that beginning *bhāle gorā-gadādharera ārati nehāri* and that beginning *jaya jaya rādhā-kṛṣṇa yugala-milana.* Sometimes Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would request one of his closest associates to sing to him other esoteric compositions of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, such as those beginning *āmi to' svānanda-sukhada-vāsī* and *rādhā-kuṇḍa-taṭa kuñja-kuṭīra.*

While pointing his disciples toward the ultimate goal, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura insisted that unless suitably qualified, they should not concentrate on compositions articulating the highest devotional emotions, and especially not on those describing transcendental eroticism.* He disallowed for public recitation many songs likely to be erogenous for all but advanced devotees. Among such restricted compositions was the well-known and exquisitely beautiful exordial song from *Śrī Gīta-govinda* "Maṅgala-gītam," in which only the first line, *śrita-kamalā-kuca-maṇḍala*, was somewhat erotic: "He who rests on the breasts of the goddess of fortune." Yet in the mid-1930s, he introduced the singing during Kārtika of *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā-kīrtanas* from Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *Bhajana-rahasya,* albeit they and their

accompanying commentaries were recited only among devotees, not publicly. Thenceforth during each Kārtika, disciples at all levels participated in hearing *Bhajana-rahasya* up to the fourth verse; only a few particularly advanced disciples were permitted to recite or discuss the *kīrtanas* of and commentaries on the remaining stanzas.

Some time in 1913, a *kīrtanīyā* arrived unannounced at the house that Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī was renting in Calcutta. But when he chanted *bhuvana-mohinī rādhe* (O Rādhā, enchantress of the world), Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī immediately objected, "This is *siddhānta-viruddha* (against scriptural conclusions). Rādhā is the enchantress, Mohinī, of the mind of the enchanter of the spiritual world, Kṛṣṇa, and thus may be correctly called Bhuvana-mohana-manomohinī."[†] He then expounded at length on authorized *rūpānuga-kīrtana* of the name of Rādhā, and spoke against the cheating of *prākṛta-sahajiyās* in their overenthusiasm to chant Her name.

When a *gṛhastha* disciple requested, "Guru-mahārāja, please ask Ananta Vāsudeva to sing 'Yaśomatī-nandana.' He chants it so nicely," Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura replied, "This is the wrong attitude. All *kīrtana* should be sung for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure, not for you to hear and enjoy. *Yaśomatī-nandana braja-bara-nāgara*—you want a *nāgara.* You want this kind of song, not *duṣṭa mana! tumi kisera vaiṣṇava?* or *gopīnātha mama nivedana śuno*."[‡]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura strongly opposed the paying of professional artists for *kīrtana* performances. He would say, "They are not chanting 'Hari! Hari!' but 'Money! Money!'—thereby merely increasing their bile secretion."

Once, at dawn at the Yogapīṭha, Śrī Sītānātha dāsa Mahāpātra Bhakti Tīrtha, a disciple of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and an accomplished musician, was playing harmonium and sweetly crooning with intricate vocal modulations *rāī jāgo, rāī jāgo:* "Rādhā, wake up! Rādhā, wake up!"[*] When Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was informed of this he stopped the recital with the message, "First wake yourself up. Only after being established in your original spiritual form is it proper to think of waking Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī."

On another occasion that same devotee was singing the *mahā-mantra* in such a long, drawn-out manner that it took him a full fifteen minutes to complete one mantra. He was modulating his voice and harmonium up and down the scale and gesticulating as if expressing deep emotion.[†] Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura later remarked that the *mahā-mantra* could have been sung fifty times in the same amount of time that the musician was singing it only once. He further commented:

> Persons lacking taste for the holy names or devotional service are attached to melodious tunes and musical performances as entertainment for their senses. We can dispel listlessness and all other *anarthas* by loudly and faithfully performing *kīrtana* of the *mahā-mantra* in the association of pure devotees. Members of the *tāla-ṭokā sampradāya,* those interested simply in rhythm and other musical attributes, are utterly entangled in profit, adoration, and distinction.[‡] Pure devotees always distance themselves from such pretenders and instead worship the holy name by full absorption in *saṅkīrtana.* Bhagavān,

who is addressed by His holy names by such faithful devotees, manifests to them His transcendental form, qualities, and pastimes. Love of Kṛṣṇa develops exclusively in the hearts of those who chant in this way.[13]

Circa 1905 in an assembly in Lohagada, Jessore District, after a *kīrtanīyā* warbled, "Let me behold You standing on the left of the lotus of my heart, and then play Your flute," Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī piped in a refrain: "O my hired gardener, if You don't stand up I'll give You a whipping!" Then he reproved, "There is not even a trace of *bhakti* here. It is simply chockablock with desire for personal enjoyment. Real devotees do not sing like this."[14]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura knew all of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's songs by heart, for they *were* his heart. Among his favorites were "Gopīnātha," "Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Bol," "Jaya Rādhā-Mādhava," "Śrī Nāma-kīrtana," and "Harināma Tuyā Aneka Svarūpa." Similarly, *Prārthanā* and *Prema-bhakti-candrikā* were practically his life breath, from which he particularly relished "Śrī-rūpa-mañjarī-pada," which he said should be kept by *sādhakas* as a garland around their neck.[15] Especially on the *āvirbhāva-tithis* of Viṣṇu-avatars, he would have Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī's "Daśāvatāra Stotra" chanted.

Before establishing Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī lived for two months with some disciples in a rented house in Purī. During that period he sent them to the seashore in the early morning to congregationally chant the Pañca-tattva mantra, *śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu nityānanda śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*. He explained that Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His associates were at that time coming to bathe in the sea.[*]

Once when the Maharaja of Madhupur came to the Saccidānanda Maṭha, he requested that Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu sing, but Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura directed another devotee, who was not such a sweet singer, to chant instead.[†] Yet on another occasion, in the presence of the Maharaja of Purī at a public program in Cuttack, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura asked Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu to sing "Śrī Vraja-dhāma-mahimāmṛta," which describes the places, inhabitants, and moods of Vṛndāvana. Later he personally expounded these topics to the maharaja.

During *āratis* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī generally remained behind the *tulasī-mañca* just outside the *nāṭya-mandira,* taking pleasure in seeing the devotees dancing.[*] They sometimes danced back and forth between the deities and the *tulasī-mañca,* and sometimes in a circle around the *nāṭya-mandira.* From time to time he would stand in the middle of the *nāṭya-mandira,* with the devotees dancing around him, but would remain grave and not dance. He preferred that his disciples dance in a dignified manner, and on at least one occasion stopped a disciple who was dancing frenetically.

Japa

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī often emphasized that those who do not chant at least one lakh of names, i.e., sixty-four *mālās* of *mahā-mantra japa,* are considered fallen.[16] He wrote:

> Gaurasundara states that Bhagavān is truly served in the home of one who chants a lakh of names daily. The Lord accepts food and other offerings made to Him by such a devotee.[†] Conversely, if a disciple does not chant a lakh of names per day, the Lord does not bless him by accepting his offerings. Every single devotee must daily chant a lakh of names; otherwise he will soon become attached to various forms of sense gratification and thus will be incapable of serving the Lord. For this reason, all sheltered by Śrī Caitanya-deva daily chant at least one lakh; otherwise Gaurasundara will not accept the offerings made to Him.[17]

He repeatedly insisted that all devotees must daily chant at least one lakh of *harināma.* To the several devotees who more than once asked him for permission to reduce their quota, citing lack of time, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would tell them to somehow or other make time. To some *pūjārīs* at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha who pleaded insufficient time, he firmly rejoined: "No excuses. Every day one lakh of *harināma* must be chanted; otherwise Mahāprabhu will not accept even water. What is the value of *arcana* if Mahāprabhu is not properly served?" Yet he kept all *maṭha-vāsīs* busy with multifarious services, stating that *sevā* and *mālā* (chanting on beads) are nondifferent, and that a sincere attitude of service is the very essence of chanting, without cultivating which, even chanting all day and night is of little value. He told his disciples:

> During the day remain busy in service. Due to other engagements you might not chant a lakh, but that should be your *lakhya* (aim). If sometimes you are too busy during the day to chant on your *mālā,* then instead of taking rest at night, chant. If you cannot finish your prescribed *japa,* then sleep less and chant. Do not increase your time for sleeping—increase your chanting. *Kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ:* 'Always chant the holy name.' Wake up with the holy name, go on chanting throughout the day, and go to sleep with the holy name. If you practice this, naturally you will also chant while sleeping.[18]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī also stated that without service to Hari-guru-Vaiṣṇavas, chanting many *mālās* is simply blather. And he instructed followers to always perform service while simultaneously chanting *harināma.*[19] To Sarveśvara Brahmacārī, who submitted that due to his service load he had no fixed time for chanting *japa,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī responded, "According to the time available and individual ability, some rounds should be chanted on beads. And by chanting while performing various services, even without counting, a lakh or more names will be tallied in a day." Sarveśvara added, "Even though you insist that we chant one lakh of *harināma* daily, I don't see everyone doing so." Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī shot back, "You don't see, but I see!" At the time, Sarveśvara Brahmacārī could not understand this reply, yet by the mercy of his *gurudeva* he eventually realized that a devotee's

continual engagement in service is nondifferent from chanting *japa,* and that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī knew which disciples were or were not fulfilling the *lakhya* of service, regardless of whether they completed their stipulated *mālās.*[20]

When a disciple told him, "We don't have time to chant one lakh," Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura retorted, "It is not that chanting is taking time from service, or that service is taking time from chanting, but idle talks are devouring time meant for both. Stop *prajalpa* and you will find time to chant a lakh. No doubt you are doing considerable service, yet simultaneously so much *prajalpa* is going on. Stop wasting time."[*]

One lakh of *harināma* was the expected standard for *pūjārīs* and other *maṭha-vāsīs* who generally did not go out to preach. Others were told to *try* to chant sixty-four *mālās,* or at least to progress toward that standard. Preachers and managers had no fixed time for *japa,* but were expected to chant at least sixteen *mālās* and otherwise be always busy in *para-upakāra* (spiritual welfare work). Yet even though engaged in intense preaching, some sannyasis daily chanted a lakh of names or more. Śrīmad Bhakti Śrīrūpa Purī Mahārāja never ate anything or took even a drop of water before completing one lakh of *harināma*. Devotees often completed their quota of *japa* late at night in the temple, after all other duties.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī considered chanting a lakh of names more important for *gṛhasthas* than for *maṭha-vāsīs,* because *maṭha-vāsīs* are always engaged in Kṛṣṇa-*sevā* whereas most householders' focus is on earning for family maintenance. He said that in the evening after their daily work, *gṛhasthas* should attend the Maṭha, and that if it were necessary for completing one lakh of names, they should chant throughout the night. But the majority of householders could not live up to this ideal.[*]

Understanding the plight of many *gṛhasthas,* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura advised some who had taken *harināma* but not *dīkṣā,* and who did not live at the Maṭha, to chant at least four *mālās;* and he instructed others just to chant, without specifying any particular number of *mālās.* He exhorted that *tulasī* beads should not "fast"; every day they should be chanted on. Usually householders were simply given beads and told to chant as much as possible. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda stated that in his household life he chanted sixteen *mālās* daily.[21]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī further explained that simply to complete a quota was not the objective, for a devotee must also strive to remain attentive while chanting and to become free from offenses to the holy name. Regarding a sannyasi disciple who repeatedly exhorted others to chant *japa* attentively, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī remarked, "He himself does not hear properly when chanting, but is preaching to others about the same fault."

When asked by Jati Śekhara Prabhu how to fix one's mind on the name while chanting, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura quoted:

nāma cintāmaṇiḥ kṛṣṇaś caitanya-rasa-vigrahaḥ

pūrṇaḥ śuddho nitya-mukto 'bhinnatvān nāma-nāminoḥ

The holy name of Kṛṣṇa is transcendentally blissful. It bestows all spiritual benedictions, for it is Kṛṣṇa Himself, the reservoir of all pleasure. Kṛṣṇa's name is complete and is the form of all transcendental mellows. It is not a material name under any condition, and is no less powerful than Kṛṣṇa Himself. Since Kṛṣṇa's name is not contaminated by material qualities, there is no question of its being involved with *māyā.* Kṛṣṇa's name is always liberated and spiritual; it is never conditioned by the laws of material nature. This is because Kṛṣṇa's name and Kṛṣṇa Himself are identical.[22]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura said further, "The name is Kṛṣṇa Himself, replete with all potencies. So utter loudly, and simultaneously hear. If you actually chant and hear, then soon you will attain perfection. *Yei nāma sei kṛṣṇa bhaja niṣṭhā kari:* 'That name is Kṛṣṇa. Resolutely worship the name.' "[23] Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura then requested Jati Śekhara Prabhu to chant a lakh of *harināma* daily, but he replied, "How is it possible? We have multiple duties. We have to attend temple functions and go outside for *bhikṣā.*" So Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura asked him to try to chant at least thirty-two *mālās* per day.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī advised *maṭha-vāsīs* that immediately upon waking, even if as early as two o'clock, they should not go back to sleep but should rise and chant the holy names. "*Harināma* is our life," he would say. Several devotees followed this prescription and rose very early to chant.

When asked by Jati Śekhara Prabhu, "If when on the train I go to the toilet, should I leave my *japa-mālā* outside or put it in my pocket?" Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura replied that the *mālā* received from *śrī-gurudeva* is just like a deity and therefore should be kept carefully. He advised Jati Śekhara Prabhu to always keep his beads with him so that they not get lost or stolen. Pointing out that devotees wear *tulasī* neckbeads while in the toilet, he indicated that if necessary it was passable to take chanting beads inside a lavatory.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī recommended that while fingering *tulasī* chanting beads, one mentally touch them to the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya.[24] And he advised an early follower to at all times chant the holy names while keeping within the heart such prayers as those of Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura beginning *gorā pahuṅ nā bhajiyā mainu.*[25]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī himself chanted *japa* quite slowly and distinctly, in a gentle, undulating voice with almost musical cadence, sometimes interspersing verses of *nāma-mahimā* (glories of the holy name).

Twelve

Service to Śāstra

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was absorbed in scripture and philosophy and in relishing and explaining *śāstrīya* verses. He seemingly had unlimited knowledge of *śāstra,* which he quoted profusely both in speaking and writing. For instance, he cited over two hundred scriptural sources in his *Anubhāṣya* on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* and in his commentary on *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* 1.16.11 he clarified the important phrase *dāsa-prabhu-bheda* (the difference between servant and master) by giving a total of eighty-eight *śāstrīya* references—twenty-two from *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad,* twenty-one from *Brahma-sūtra,* sixteen from *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad,* nine from *Chāndogya Upaniṣad,* eight from *Kaṭha Upaniṣad,* seven from *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad,* four from *Taittirīya Upaniṣad,* and one from *Ṛk-saṁhitā.*

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī viewed scriptural writings not as mere amassments of information, but as the direct presence of the *ācāryas* who had authored them. By propagating the *ācāryas'* message, he desired to increase the number of people serving them. He taught that one can attain the association of the *ācāryas* by preaching *śāstra-vāṇī.*

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura wanted that at least the more intellectual among his disciples be learned in *śāstra.* To this end he instituted demanding courses of study leading toward Bhakti-śāstrī and other degrees, each requiring extensive knowledge acquired from several seminal books.[*] Even his academically less inclined disciples were minimally required to imbibe the *daśamūla* (ten basic points of Vaiṣṇava philosophy according to the teachings of Lord Caitanya) as described by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in his teachings regarding *daśamūla:* first, that *pramāṇa* (the authoritative source of knowledge) is *śāstra* and the discipular succession of *ācāryas,* and subsequently, the nine *prameyas* (elementary truths proved by this authority).[†] The *prameyas* were as given by Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa in his *Prameya-ratnāvalī,* which was based on the teachings of Śrī Madhvācārya. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura described each point in detail, with profuse supporting references from the Vedas, *Purāṇas,* and corroborative literature, including *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta.* Just as the Ayurvedic medicine *daśamūla,* prepared from ten herbs, is a cure for all kinds of fever, so familiarity with *daśamūla* is essential for *sādhakas* in *bhakti,* for it removes all diseaselike misconceptions and fortifies faith—the basis of all further progress—and counteracts pollution within the *sampradāya.* In the Gauḍīya Maṭha, knowledge of *daśamūla* was inculcated from the beginning of each newcomer's induction into the path of *śuddha-bhakti,* usually prior to or shortly after bestowal of *harināma.*

Hari-kathā

Although everything Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura did was to promote the pure *kīrtana* of the holy names, he was known mainly for his speaking, not singing. He claimed *kīrtana* as his only activity, yet clearly his *kīrtana* was primarily Hari-*kathā*.[*] He often explained Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's famous dictum *kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ,* generally understood to promote unceasing chanting of the holy names, as an injunction for nonstop glorification of the Lord by Hari-*kathā.* Thus Hari-*kathā* was Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's life, issuing forth from his lotus mouth as naturally as breathing:

> I have had the opportunity to hear and discuss these topics since the beginning of my life. I have been discussing these points for fifty years now, in great detail and at every moment throughout the twenty-four hours, when awake and even when slumbering. While continuously discussing these topics, eventually my body will wear out and fall down.[1]
>
> I will glorify until the last moment of my life all that I have learned from my gurus.[2]
>
> Why only one mouth? Let me have unlimited mouths and an unlimited lifespan to unlimitedly glorify the unlimited qualities of Kṛṣṇa's devotees.

The *kīrtana* culture widespread in Bengal had sprung from Lord Caitanya's propagating *harer nāmaiva kevalam,* misunderstanding of which had led to underemphasis of the importance of *śravaṇa* (hearing Hari-*kathā*).[*] But Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī revealed that Hari-*kathā* is the *svarūpa-śakti* of *harināma:* just as Kṛṣṇa is properly worshiped not alone but with His *svarūpa-śakti* Śrī Rādhā, recitation of *harināma* is incomplete and improper unless accompanied by hearing Hari-*kathā.* He stated that wherever Hari-*kathā* is spoken is a *tīrtha,*[3] and that Hari-*kathā* is the guardian of genuine sadhus in a world where everything that surrounds one is ready to become an enemy and attack the unprotected.[4] Moreover, he stressed that taste for and faith in Hari-*kathā* is the very root of Hari-*sevā,* and would cite *hari-kathā hi kevalaṁ paramaṁ śreyaḥ:* "Hari-*kathā* alone is the supremely beneficial activity."[5] And:

> There is no other method of wellbeing besides unceasingly and attentively hearing discourses about Hari from the highest devotee, who is the most beloved of Kṛṣṇa. There is no other means for attaining service to the Absolute save the guided aural activity for catching the transcendental sound.[6]

He would quote:

> *tad-dinaṁ durdinaṁ manye meghācchanaṁ na durdinam*
> *yad-dinaṁ kṛṣṇa-saṁlāpa- kathā-pīyūṣa-varjitam*
>
> I do not consider bad a day covered with clouds, but one devoid of discussing the nectar of Kṛṣṇa-*kathā*.[7]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was a voluble river of ambrosial Kṛṣṇa-*kathā.* Being fully imbued with and nondifferent from transcendental energy, his words had the capability to enter the deepest recesses of hearers' hearts and connect them to the spiritual. Simply upon hearing him but once, several persons surrendered and became his disciples. His potency derived from his own faith in and dedication to delivering Hari-*kathā:*

> Without spending two hundred gallons of blood in preaching Hari-*kathā* to all individuals, they will receive no impression. Even though we do this, many hearers remain unaffected. Nonetheless we are ready to speak Hari-*kathā.* There is a great lack of Hari-*kathā,* a great lack. I have gone to the seven places that give liberation.[*] After visiting numerous places in India I have come here. I did not meet even one person who could water the desert of my heart with Kṛṣṇa-*kathā.* After studying Vedānta for billions of lives one cannot attain liberation. To levitate ten or twenty feet by extended pressing of the nostrils bestows no auspiciousness, but if one hears *Bhāgavatam* from a person who is himself a *bhāgavata,* then all *jīvas* in the universe are benefited.[8]
>
> My steadfast hope is that by continually speaking Hari-*kathā* to many people, one or two good souls may become heedful to it.[9]

The *Harmonist* analyzed the nature of his speaking:

> The *ācārya* of the Gauḍīya Maṭha always speaks out the whole truth and nothing but the truth. It is this which makes his language universally acceptable against the most cherished convictions of his audience. It is supremely thought-provoking. It always goes straight to the point, not to the expected but to the point needed for the prevention of any misunderstanding.[10]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura revealed his heartfelt desires regarding Hari-*kathā:*

> When Brahmā, speaking with four mouths, and Anantadeva, speaking with a thousand tongues, are unable to complete their discourses on Vaiṣṇavism, how little can I, who am so insignificant, say of it? Yet till my last day may I continue to hear Hari-*kathā* from those who really serve Hari and chant about Vaiṣṇava dharma.[11]
>
> While residing in this sphere, one must speak about and glorify Kṛṣṇa to others twenty-four hours a day. Mahāprabhu taught that one should chant in all circumstances, even while sleeping and eating. Fourteen or fifteen years ago I used to wonder how it could be possible to chant continuously, for it would get mixed up with associating with materialistic people. But now Kṛṣṇa has sent me many friends who have given up all their varied engagements and have come to hear and speak about Kṛṣṇa. My most worshipable *gurudeva* repeatedly stated that wherever there is no Kṛṣṇa-*kathā* is the world of *māyā,* and forbad me to go there. I then thought that wherever I go I will bring about discussion of Kṛṣṇa, and wherever such an opportunity may exist, I must go there. My job is to go door to door like a peon, reciting the instructions of my *gurudeva* to the entire human

> society. It will be good if all of you can extend this message to the whole world. It will be good if you can make Kṛṣṇa known to all living entities. Always speak Kṛṣṇa-*kathā.* My sempiternal wish is that in unlimited ways you constantly remain preaching Kṛṣṇa-*kathā.* Then all my desires will be fulfilled.[12]
>
> In this illusory existence, especially in the present strife-torn age, the prevalence of discussing topics devoid of Kṛṣṇa far outweighs that of Hari-*kathā.* Hence it is the duty of devotees to preach topics of the limitless Supreme Lord up to the last moment of life.[13]

In pursuance of this ideal, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura often spoke animatedly for hours, formally or informally, to large gatherings or to merely one or two individuals. The *Harmonist* reported: "His Divine Grace is accessible at all hours to persons of all conditions. He talked almost continuously during his stay at Allahabad to those who came to him."[14] Apart from his regular lectures in various branches of the Gauḍīya Maṭha diaspora, he also spoke occasionally in other temples, in educational institutions and public halls, and often in private homes, especially those of prominent and well-educated citizens. Sometimes he ranged over various topics, other times elaborating specific points in great detail.

In those days, when people generally led relatively relaxed lives, without multiple diversions that reduced their attention span, protracted religious sermons were a welcome part of life. Many persons of pious disposition accepted the importance of hearing from saintly persons and were prepared to sit as long as a sadhu went on speaking. But even by the standards of that era, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's lectures tended to be lengthy, usually at least two hours yet often four, five, or more. For instance, throughout ten days at Daulatpur in 1918, he would lecture from early morning until early afternoon and then again from evening until late night. And the *Bombay Chronicle* of 15 May 1933 reported, "His Divine Grace gives his regular discourses from 4:00 p.m. till 8:00 p.m. every day." His dream was unlimited Hari-*kathā:* "When big city halls have been transformed into Gauḍīya Maṭhas and Hari-*kathā* is heard everywhere, at that time the whole world will be filled with ecstasy."[15]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's Hari-*kathā* was not limited by time or circumstance. Once, on arriving in Gauhati after an arduous train journey from Calcutta, he spoke nonstop for several hours at the residence of an advocate. When his host suggested that he rest, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura replied that Hari-*kathā-kīrtana* is itself rest, for it dispells all fatigue and trouble, and that to divert attention even for a moment to any other endeavor is symptomatic of envy of Kṛṣṇa. Sometimes at the Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, he would be sitting on the upstairs veranda outside his room late at night chanting or instructing disciples, when upon hearing a passerby he would call out, "Who goes there?" According to the response his preaching would begin. If the response were "It is I," Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura might then ask, "But who is I, the body or the soul?" and the ensuing discussion might continue deep into the night.

Unlike most popular religious orators, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī spoke primarily on *tattva* and rarely on *līlā,* and when revealing *līlā* he did so through the lens of *tattva-jñāna.* Yet this highly philosophical approach was not simply intellectualism, but was always directed at

understanding the supreme object of understanding, the Personality of Godhead, and at understanding the need to surrender to Him by comprehending His position as paramount and that of the *jīva* as utterly subservient. As he would say, "Religion without philosophy is sentiment, or sometimes fanaticism, while philosophy without religion is mental speculation."[*] When he did narrate *līlā-kathā* it was not quasi-spiritual entertainment, nor descriptions of privy pastimes beyond the realization of his hearers.[†]

At different times he commented on his mode of delivery: "No one can enter into *bhakti* without understanding the worthlessness of all viewpoints and theories of this world";[16] "People are committing common errors. I try my best to explain their faults. For this reason my discourses are long";[17] We need to say many things all at once, but if we do so, the listeners won't be able to catch it all. So we have to speak in bits to get it understood;[18] "All disturbances in the universe would be solved if people simply agreed to regularly hear Hari-*kathā* from pure devotees."

Often he exhorted listeners, "All that is required of you is to lend me your ears," and stressed the need to hear submissively:

> When a person speaks *bhagavat-kathā,* one can heckle or obstruct him, or oppose his conclusions to try to best him. But we should know that there is no means of attaining eternal benefit except hearing about and glorifying the Lord. *Nānya-panthā vidyate 'yanāya:* "There is no other path for going there."[19]

He asserted the extreme necessity of hearing Hari-*kathā:*

> We insist, "Always hear Hari-*kathā.*" If someone says, "My son is on the brink of death," we would reply, "Even so, you should go on hearing Hari-*kathā.*" One must be delivered from foolishness. One must turn his heart from material subjects to Kṛṣṇa.[20]

He insisted that to be actually effective, hearing must be one-pointed:

> One cannot hear Hari-*kathā* if he goes to the theater or cinema, listens to mundane music or the speeches of professional reciters or so-called *paṇḍitas,* or associates with or pays attention to men attached to women, or to anyone with an outlook different from that of *śuddha-bhakti.*[21]

Kundan Lal, from a respectable family of Agra, the members of which were by tradition votaries of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, had married an Englishwoman and for twenty years prior to taking *harināma* from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had been the assistant editor of the Manchester *Guardian.* Knowing that Kundan Lal was by profession well acquainted with war tactics, once when Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was delivering a lecture attended by him, he gave a martial simile: "Just as an army lands in a country and the fight begins for capturing the territory, we must allow Kṛṣṇa to land in our hearts. Upon entering, He will challenge all materialistic intellections: 'This entire area is mine. All of you are trespassers.' The enemy will

surely withdraw and Kṛṣṇa will completely capture the heart. So somehow or other hear from a genuine sadhu, and let at least a fragment of *bhakti* communicated from his heart enter into your ear and heart. Then Kṛṣṇa will gradually slay all misconceptions and conquer your heart:

> *śṛṇvatāṁ sva-kathāḥ kṛṣṇaḥ puṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtanaḥ*
> *hṛdy antaḥ-stho hy abhadrāṇi vidhunoti suhṛt satām*
>
> *naṣṭa-prāyeṣv abhadreṣu nityaṁ bhāgavata-sevayā*
> *bhagavaty uttama-śloke bhaktir bhavati naiṣṭhikī*
>
> Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, the Paramātmā in everyone's heart, and benefactor of the truthful devotee, cleanses desire for material enjoyment from the heart of the devotee who has developed the urge to hear His messages, which are in themselves virtuous when properly heard and chanted.
>
> By regularly hearing about Kṛṣṇa and rendering service to the pure devotee, all that is troublesome to the heart is almost completely destroyed, and loving service unto the Personality of Godhead, who is praised with transcendental songs, is established as an irrevocable fact." (SB 1.2.17–18)

Shortly before his disappearance, while Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was sitting in his car just prior to leaving Purī for the last time, his disciple Śrī Jadumaṇi Pattnaik pleaded, "Now that you are departing what should I do?" Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura answered, "Hear the *Bhāgavatam* daily in the Maṭha."

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura regularly discoursed in the Gauḍīya Maṭhas to his disciples. His lectures were profound and, even though intricately philosophical, always fresh and invigorating. As he spoke, he constantly introduced angles of understanding not known to ever have been heard or expressed before. Often his pronouncements were so unexpected and apparently outrageous as to turn upside down the conceptions of his listeners and challenge them to wholly revise their perceptions of reality:

Others worship Rādhā due to Her connection with Kṛṣṇa, but we worship Kṛṣṇa only because of His connection with Rādhā.*

Kurukṣetra is the best place for *bhajana;* only bogus, hollow people favor Vṛndāvana.†

Hiraṇyakaśipu better proclaimed the glory of Nṛsiṁha-deva than did Prahlāda.‡

Better to dismantle the temple and print books.*

I have not come as a contractor, but as a peon of Śrī Caitanya-deva's *vāṇī.*†

The neophyte devotee's ringing the temple bell is more beneficial than opening innumerable

hospitals.[‡]

Shocking as such statements might have seemed, persons who regularly listened to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura could appreciate that his *bhakti-siddhānta* was indeed truth, and that the conventional intellections he combated were actually false and thus inauspicious, misleading, and dangerous.

When lecturing at the Maṭha, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī usually sat cross-legged on a plain low wooden stool, there being no special raised seat kept exclusively for the *ācārya* as in some traditional *maṭhas.* When speaking in his room, he would sit on an ordinary wooden chair or in an armchair, with his feet on the ground, his disciples sitting cross-legged on the floor.

According to custom, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura preceded formal Hari-*kathā* by reciting *maṅgalācaraṇa.* He often ended with a verse glorifying the Supreme Lord and His devotees or supplicating their mercy, or with one that summarized or brought to a conclusion the subjects he had spoken on.[§] Many of his discourses, especially less formal ones in the Maṭha, were delivered without a given theme. Even his scheduled daily lectures were mostly not according to a sequential series of verses; he would simply vent whatever transcendental thoughts were then flowing in his ever-inspired consciousness. Often before beginning a formal speech, he would have a disciple sing a particular *kīrtana,* or occasionally have two or three disciples consecutively chant specific *kīrtanas* according to his direction. Sometimes his Hari-*kathā* consisted of explaining the import of all or part of a song that had just been recited.

Traveling from place to place with his sannyasis and senior disciples, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura lectured widely to the public, giving scholarly discourses on diverse theological subjects, with titles such as "Śrī-bhāṣya and Anubhāṣya," "Acintya-bhedābheda-tattva and Viśiṣṭādvaita," "Śrīdhara Svāmī and Māyāvāda," and so forth. Apart from such traditional themes, he also gave topical illustrations, such as Professor Einstein's theories, medical experiments with monkey glands, and the Pope's endeavors to bring peace to Europe. To demonstrate various points, he often cited anecdotes, largely from his own experience and from the lives of the recent *ācāryas* Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī and from biographies of other *ācāryas* and Purāṇic figures. He also gave brief didactic analogies, such as comparing persons who prayed to God for material boons to a man who approached a king and was told "Whatever you want you can ask from me," yet responded by asking for a pinch of ashes.

In deliberate contrast to professional *Bhāgavatam* reciters, who expected financial remuneration, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would not accept money after delivering Hari-*kathā,* but directed donors to give to the Maṭha.

When during a lecture a legal clerk interrupted with a question, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura told him, "Please do not disturb now; I will reply after the talk." After concluding, he requested him to now voice his query, but the clerk had forgotten it. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura admonished him, "Inquiries are meant to be meaningful, not asked merely out of curiosity. Had the question been

serious, you would not have forgotten it." He gave the example of Sanātana Gosvāmī, who had inquired on spiritual subject matter from Lord Caitanya, saying:

> *'sādhya'-'sādhana'-tattva puchite nā jāni*
> *kṛpā kari' saba tattva kaha ta' āpani*
>
> I do not know how to inquire about the goal of life and the process for obtaining it. Being merciful upon me, please explain all these truths. (Cc 2.20.103)

At Saccidānanda Maṭha prior to a lecture, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī once asked devotees why they had only halfway spread the large rug for attendees to sit on. When told that only a few listeners were expected, he replied, "*Brahmā-ādi deva-gaṇe.* You cannot see who is coming to hear *Bhāgavatam*. Innumerable gods and goddesses come to attend Gaurāṅga's *ārati* and hear Hari-*kathā.* W e must have a place for them to sit, so unfold it fully and make a place for them."

When from his upstairs room at Saccidānanda Maṭha Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura heard Śrīmad Bodhāyana Mahārāja tutoring *brahmacārīs* in techniques for public speaking, he angrily ordered that it be stopped, stating, "Not by training can one speak Hari-*kathā*. He who serves is blessed to speak—*sevonmukhe hi jihvādau.* Inspiration will come automatically."[*] Similarly, on another occasion he stated:

> From my guru I have learned that mundane oratory, poesy, literary analysis, intelligence, learning, and logic are not only unhelpful in glorifying the Lord, but are positive obstacles in doing so. Only a fortunate person, after slashing at the root all faith in worldly abilities and endeavors, is by the mercy of Hari-guru-Vaiṣṇavas empowered with the Lord's *svarūpa-śakti* and thereby enabled to broadcast Gaura-*vāṇī.* Without being thus favored and empowered, oratory expertise simply airs inauspicious topics of worldly sense gratification and increases material desires and egoism.[22]

He described the mentality required of a speaker:

> "I will speak and others will hear," or "I am the speaker and others the listeners"—this kind of thinking is merely insincerity. I do not come here having planned what to say. Upon seeing you I speak whatever Kṛṣṇa dictates in my mind. When will I attain the fortune to be a servant of the servant of the Vaiṣṇavas? It is essential to serve the established pure, internal devotees.[*] My service to them is through this feeble attempt whereby others will in the future embrace the right path. I speak all these words for those who in the future will be Vaiṣṇavas and accept *dīkṣā*.[23]

While lecturing at his Vyāsa-*pūjā* function in 1933, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī further revealed this humility of regarding himself a mere instrument for delivering Hari-*kathā:*

> I have no *kathā* of my own. My *gurudeva* has engaged me in carrying to the world all the

kathā that he has carried from Vaikuṇṭha. But in all respects I am unqualified. I am without knowledge of language, and my only possession is unfitness in all matters. Only Bhagavān can protect one so incompetent as I.[24]

Notwithstanding the transcendental brilliance of his lectures, he considered it even more effective to personally instruct individuals, deeming that general speeches cannot solve the problems of all hearers nor always uplift every hearer. He gave the example that various diseases require individualized treatment, and cited the efficacy of private tutoring over lecturing in colleges, concluding that by instructing particular persons separately, one can award greater permanent benefit.[25]

In later years, occasionally Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's memory was apparently less sharp, so a few highly qualified devotees, especially Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu, or otherwise Śrīmad B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja or Sundarānanda Prabhu, would if required supply appropriate *śāstrīya* verses to support points he was making.

The Transcendental Approach to Scripture

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura wanted his disciples to imbibe a service attitude and not simply become bookworms. He would say that the ability to turn the pages of books and cast one's eyes on their contents does not constitute the qualification to comprehend them, particularly the esoteric works of self-realized *ācāryas*. He gave the example that without meaningful engagement in Kṛṣṇa-*sevā,* inordinate poring over texts is like licking the outside of a honey jar, for the taste and nourishment derived from Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti* cannot be attained merely by studying it; one must actually perform *bhakti* to experience it. He repeatedly quoted the stanza *sevonmukhe hi jihvādau,* explaining, "Out of His own mercy Kṛṣṇa reveals all scriptural conclusions to those who please Him by their service attitude. Trying to understand the absolute truth merely by learning and cerebration is like trying to see the sun at night by holding a torch."[26]

Once he related how he himself had imbibed *śāstrīya* conclusions:

> From early childhood I heard from Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura about the unique qualities of Lord Caitanya. The Ṭhākura would say that only he who has greed, taste, and respect for unmotivated service to the Lord can overcome ignorance. In my childhood he also taught me the method for chanting the holy names, and thus from that time I had opportunity to hear about offenses to the name, *nāmābhāsa,* and the special characteristics of the name. He was not in favor of excessive study. He would say that people who study too much often lose their intelligence, and their pride increases. Erudition that is incongenial to Hari-*sevā* has no value.

At this point a college student, one of several persons to whom Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was speaking, interjected, "If we don't learn reading and writing then how can we study *śāstra*?" Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura replied, "I have imbibed the meaning of all the scriptures by observing the exemplary character of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and my *gurudeva* Paramahaṁsa Bābājī. One cannot realize the true purpose of *śāstra* by expertise in grammar or by memorizing roots and endings of words. If that were so, then the great worldly professors would have comprehended the factual import of *śāstra.*"[27]

Not that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī did not want his disciples to read *śāstra,* but he was concerned that they do so with the proper attitude. He accepted study as genuinely devotional only if undertaken for self-purification and to gain knowledge for preaching, and warned against the desire to become a *paṇḍita* for self-aggrandizement or intellectual sense enjoyment: "Hear from the lips of a pure devotee. Your guru will tell you which books to read, one by one. Those who pore through myriad texts without the instruction of the guru will never get *bhakti*. On the other hand, if you do not read at all, you will become a *prākṛta-sahajiyā.*"[*]

A *brahmacārī* once took some titles from the Maṭha bookstall for his personal reading, without informing the manager. Regarding this unauthorized act as serious, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura instructed that *brahmacārī* not to keep books: "By intensive study you might become a

paṇḍita, but maybe not a devotee. Hearing from sadhus is sufficient, and indeed essential."

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī explained that hearing could be truly beneficial if accompanied by faith and submissiveness rather than an academic spirit. Although he himself was decidely philosophical, he cautioned against a solely intellectual approach to spiritual knowledge, emphasizing the superiority of *avaroha-panthā* (the "descending" process of receiving transcendental knowledge through bona fide guru-*parampara*) and the inadequacy of *āroha-panthā* (the "ascending" attempt to quantify reality by empirical observation and logical argument), which although useful in ascertaining basic principles of reality, is ineffective in higher matters that are inherently inconceivable.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura condemned as "a wild goose chase" the endeavor of *jñānīs* and mundane academics to try to measure and understand the sum total of everything, considering themselves the subject, and all else including Kṛṣṇa the object, of their knowledge. He would warn, "Don't try to comprehend everything by your puppy brains."

Accordingly, the scholarly ethos of the Gauḍīya Maṭha was tempered with the vision that learning is not in and of itself the goal, that acquisition of knowledge was desirable only as a function of and subordinate to the *bhakti* principle of surrendered service, and that the attitude of service in conjuction with hearing from pure devotees was itself the vital factor in acquiring and realizing such knowledge.

Some disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī became learned even without much study, just by regularly and attentively hearing from him and rendering Hari-*sevā* under his direction. Jati Śekhara Prabhu recalled that when he received the Bhakti-śāstrī degree he had not thoroughly studied even *Bhagavad-gītā,* let alone *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu,* and so on; he had become knowledgeable simply by regularly listening to his exalted guru. Upon later undertaking extensive study of scripture, he found that everything he had previously heard from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was fully corroborated in *Bhagavad-gītā, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* and other Vedic texts.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura instructed his disciples according to the prohibition against *bahu-grantha-kalābhyāsa,* partial study of many books: "Don't riffle through multiple works and lug them around like an ass. Better to read and know thoroughly a few."[28] He did not want that *maṭha-vāsīs* have personal libraries. To those more inclined to study than to preach he would say, "What is the use of your knowing so much *śāstra*? In Kali-yuga who will understand? Better to go out and preach";[29] and "Real learning gives rise to preaching. In one who is actually learned, the desire to make others learned automatically arises."[30]

When circa 1920 his initiated disciple Gauradāsa Brahmacārī humbly requested permission to study Sanskrit grammar to be able to read the original texts of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other *śāstras,* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura warned him that inherent in such an attempt was the danger of one's intelligence becoming perverted. He told of a person who had approached Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī with a similar proposal but ultimately became a professional *Bhāgavatam*

reciter fallen from the principles of *śuddha-bhakti,* and an offender to Vaiṣṇavas. He advised Gauradāsa that he would be better benefited by utilizing his literary aspirations in service to the Gaudiya Printing Works. Later, by perusing *Harināmāmṛta-vyākaraṇa* under a streetlight in Māyāpur after others had retired for the night, Gauradāsa became so proficient in Sanskrit as to pass with distinction a government examination held in Calcutta. This accomplishment was exuberated over in both the *Gauḍīya* and *Nadia Prakash,* as proof of the knowledge-giving nature of unmotivated devotional service, for it was hardly expected that such a complex subject could be mastered without considerably more application.

Once Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura asked an unschooled *brahmacārī* disciple whose principal service was tending the Maṭha garden, "What do you know of *tattva-jñāna*?" The *brahmacārī* replied, "I regularly hear from you and try to absorb what you say." Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura then asked him to relate something of what he had understood, upon which the illiterate devotee began to expound various sublime philosophical truths. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura then explained to the other devotees present, "This is evidence of *sevonmukhe hi jihvādau.* One can perceive Kṛṣṇa by His blessing. This boy has not studied Sanskrit or *śāstra,* nor is he fluent even in Bengali, yet he knows so many *siddhāntas.* Most great *paṇḍitas* cannot comprehend what I am saying, but this uneducated lad has grasped it all."

Rāmadāsa Prabhu was a gardener and laborer at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha. Lowborn and unlettered, he was ever busy in menial tasks—toiling in the fields, sweeping paths, throwing out garbage—all the while chanting the *mahā-mantra.* If anyone were to chastise him, he would humbly accept it and continue chanting and performing his duties. He had received *harināma* but not *dīkṣā,* which Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had said was not required for him, as he would achieve everything by *harināma* and *dhāma-sevā.*

In his householder life Śrīpāda B.S. Bhāgavata Mahārāja had been a doctor, and though well versed in secular knowledge, he had no background of *śāstra-jñāna.* Impressed by the *śāstrīya* erudition of Śrīmad Bhāratī Mahārāja and Śrīmad Bon Mahārāja and desiring to emulate them, he humbly requested Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī to engage a *paṇḍita* disciple in teaching him scripture, and thus was directed to approach Rāmadāsa Prabhu. Since at that time the number of Maṭha members was considerable, Śrīpāda Bhāgavata Mahārāja did not know who Rāmadāsa Prabhu was, but after inquiring from others he found him in a plantain garden cutting leaves to be used as plates. Since Rāmadāsa Prabhu did not at all look like a *paṇḍita,* Bhāgavata Mahārāja doubtingly requested him for lessons in *śāstra.* Being even more surprised than Mahārāja, Rāmadāsa Prabhu confessed his utter illiteracy and ignorance, and said that there must have been some confusion. So Mahārāja returned to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, who immediately asked whether he had met Rāmadāsa Prabhu and learned from him.

Bhāgavata Mahārāja pondered that perhaps his *gurudeva* was dissatisfied with him and wanted to teach him a lesson by this instruction. But Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī again earnestly advised him to humbly approach Rāmadāsa Prabhu. After being repeatedly entreated by Śrīpāda Bhāgavata Mahārāja, Rāmadāsa Prabhu finally revealed in simple but penetrating

words his practical realization of the *sevonmukhe hi jihvādau* principle: "I simply try to produce flowers and fruit for offering to the Lord. By doing so I feel enlivened to always chant the holy names. I consider this the success of my life." Then Mahārāja returned and reported this to his *gurudeva,* who commented that Rāmadāsa Prabhu's insight was the essence of *Bhāgavata* philosophy and quoted:

> *etāvaj janma-sāphalyaṁ dehināṁ iha dehiṣu*
> *prāṇair arthair dhiyā vācā śreya-ācaraṇaṁ sadā*
>
> To sacrifice one's life, wealth, intellect, and speech for the benefit of others is the highest mode of conduct for embodied beings. One should always act in this manner to make one's human birth successful.[*]

When a proposal came from Calcutta University that the Gauḍīya Maṭha accept the charge of teaching *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* therein, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura refused. He explained, "*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* is not like an ordinary book meant for perusal by one and all. It is the supreme scripture, the cream of all spiritual literature, and cannot be understood by theoretical analysis. Not merely by reading *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* can its meaning be realized; one must live purely and hear from a genuine devotee."

Toward the end of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's manifest pastimes, an elderly mundane scholar suggested that a Gauḍīya Maṭha edition of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* with elaborate commentary would be highly beneficial to the world. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī replied that it was not his purpose to compose books to satisfy the curiosity of academic readers.[31]

Yet Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was not wholly disinclined toward secular academic institutions and their methods. He commissioned his disciple Śrī Saṁvidānanda dāsa, a junior sibling and godbrother of Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu, to write a Ph.D. titled "History and Literature of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas and their Relation to Other Medieval Vaiṣṇava Schools" at the University of London. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī himself formulated the outline for the thesis, which included an evaluation of himself and the Gauḍīya Maṭha. Upon conferral of the degree in 1935, the *Harmonist* ran a report giving an abstract of the roughly thousand-page draft and noting:

> Mr. Das did not take recourse to any treatise of apocryphal origin or whose authenticity could in any way be called in question by critical scholars nor did he allow his sentiment to play any part in his account. So he has been able to keep up the true historian spirit to convince the fastidious critics and well-informed scholars of London University.
>
> It is for the first time that such a true and exhaustive account of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism along with other forms of theism prevalent in India has been placed before the English-knowing public. We congratulate Mr. Das for his able dealing of the subject which will form a landmark in the history of religion in India.[32]

Comparative Importance of Various Writings

> *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* is the first book to be read by persons on the spiritual trail. *Śrī Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* are the crest jewels of all scriptures. They are as great and worth taking refuge of as is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, and are transcendental manifestations of Kṛṣṇa-*kīrtana.*[33]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura did not advocate that all should undertake study of *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* for these are intricate philosophical works in Sanskrit, difficult to understand except by those of scholarly disposition. *Bhagavad-gītā* is generally considered meant for guiding those within *varṇāśrama—karmīs, jnānīs,* and *yogīs*—toward the path of devotion. And although introductory to the detailed spiritual knowledge of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* the *Bhagavad-gītā* is itself quite complex, expounding such subjects as various factors of action, diverse energies of the Supreme Lord and their interactions, and intricacies and relative roles of *karma, jñāna, yoga,* and *bhakti.* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura advised devotees to especially peruse the sections of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* on Dhruva Mahārāja and Prahlāda Mahārāja and also Kapila-deva's instructions.[*] And he recommended *Kṛṣṇa-prema-taraṅgiṇī,* a Bengali verse adaptation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* by Śrī Raghunātha Bhāgavatācārya, a disciple of Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita. But he warned that unless read in the original Sanskrit, weighty philosophical works such as *Govinda-bhāṣya* are often not accurately grasped, and cannot be properly appreciated unless studied under the guidance of a Vaiṣṇava *ācārya.*

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī stated that the *Upaniṣads* and *Gītā* were for the "infant class" and that it was necessary to progress further to the study of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.*[34] This was not in denigration of the *Upaniṣads* or the *Gītā,* both of which he often quoted, but to illumine the unique position of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam:*

> *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* propagates the impartial absolute truth. It is the most desirable object for non-envious devotees. *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* is curriculum for the infant class, whereas *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is for postgraduates. To qualify for the postgraduate course, those who know nothing about spiritual life use *Bhagavad-gītā* as the entrance exam. Persons desiring to attain a masters or doctorate degree in spiritual subject matter are required to study further.
>
> Nonetheless, objective devotees do not discriminate between *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The variety of adjectives and grammatical explanations found in this world become beautiful at the lotus feet of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* expounds the constitutional duty of the spirit soul and is directly an avatar of Bhagavān. No one can shake *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* even a hairsbreadth from its unique position.
>
> *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* is recommended for the infant class in the spiritual school as well as for new students who desire to enter the spiritual kingdom. Those who have become qualified by studying *Bhagavad-gītā* and wish to attain higher spiritual knowledge can

gain immense profit by properly hearing and studying *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* under a *mahā-bhāgavata.*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is directly the avatar of the Absolute Truth, not to be measured by our blunt material senses. Whatever is rare and confidential is well protected. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* does not reveal Himself to godless people.[35]

And he further extolled *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam:*

If all the books in the universe were burned to ashes, there would be no loss if only one scripture remained: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. If millions of centers of education disappear, there is no loss if teaching and learning the *Bhāgavatam* continues.[36]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī often advised Bengalis and Oriyas, most of whom had at least sentimental faith in Caitanya Mahāprabhu and rudimentary acquaintance with Vaiṣṇava philosophy, to first study *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* which although composed in simple Bengali verse, contain the essence of all scriptural conclusions and can immediately invoke the mellifluous *bhakti-rasa* offered by Lord Caitanya. He directed beginners to first go through the relatively uncomplicated *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata,* then the more philosophically intricate *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* and only thereafter *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. He often told his followers to "from time to time" read *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* and would ask Bengalis who came to see him if they had read it. He would quote Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's having stressed the importance of reading *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* —how even without reading *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* one could gain through *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* all essential truths of *śuddha-bhakti.*[37]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura once commented, "I am averse to serving the Lord. I only know philosophical analysis. *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* largely describes *līlā*. Yet in writing a commentary on it, my tendency toward philosophical judgment has come out."[*] Indeed, his commentary revealed many deep philosophical insights underlying the simply presented narrations in *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*.

He would instruct educated non-Bengali disciples to learn Bengali for studying the original texts of *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata, Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* other essential Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava works, and also *Gauḍīya* articles. He often said that a time would come when foreigners would learn Bengali just to read *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta.*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta was Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's favorite book. He regarded it as a matchless devotional work and the most important biography of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, because it succinctly yet definitively imparts His teachings and gives significantly more insights into the nature of the Lord's highest ecstasies than do *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* or other narratives.[*] Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī himself read both *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* 108 times and told others to do likewise. Especially in his later life, whenever he got time he generally read *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta.* And he explicated the glories

of and essential connection between *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta:*

> There is no other book in the universe like *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. This is not mere tittle-tattle or an amplified homage. An objective judge will realize that there has not been any book like the *Bhāgavatam*, nor will there be one. This book presents a consideration of gradual evolution, from the increasingly better conceptions of skepticism, atheism, attributelessness, neuterdom, masculinity, copulation, consorthood by marriage (*svakīya*), and lastly paramour love of the *gopīs* (*parakīya*). Kṛṣṇa-*līlā* is described in the Tenth Canto. What then was the necessity of composing the preceding nine cantos? In them have been shown the deliberation of these theories, to prepare the ground for introducing the main subject, namely the description of Kṛṣṇa's transcendental pastimes with the Vraja-*gopīs,* as given in the "Gopī-gīta" and similar sections of the Tenth Canto.
>
> There were many who read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* before Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu came into this world, but the only ones who have been able to seize the real import and actual object of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* are they who read it after reading *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* of Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, one of His chief followers in the line of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, in other words, those who have read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* within *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta. Prākṛta-sahajiyās* read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and mercenary discoursers explain it, yet they only misconstrue and cover the true reading according to the version of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta.* Their elucidation may please the minds of their hearers, but it merely makes the path to hell more easily accessible for themselves and their admirers.[38]
>
> Some persons claiming to be Gauḍīyas study the Sanskrit writings of the Six Gosvāmīs but not Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja's *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* considering it inferior due to being composed in Bengali. Yet *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* is the definitive work containing the essence of the *siddhāntas* of the Six Gosvāmīs. Thus, however learned and expert in Sanskrit a scholar may be, without attaining eligibility for studying *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* he cannot grasp the message of the Six Gosvāmīs.[39]

While Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was once glorifying the superlative character of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* to his disciples, he instructed them:

> If somehow all the books in the world were destroyed, leaving only *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* the people of this world could still achieve the ultimate goal of life. Even if *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* were lost, leaving only *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* there would be no loss to humanity, for whatever has not been revealed in the *Bhāgavatam* is found in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta.* The Absolute Truth is Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the combined form of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* is His sound incarnation, within which is found the divine mystery of Rādhārāṇī's divine status and glories. Therefore, can there be any doubt concerning the supreme status of this transcendental literature?[40]

As he stood up after ending a lecture in Munger, an earth tremor caused the adjacent Gaṅgā to overflow. The water soon receded, after which Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura said:

> In due course *māhā-pralaya* (devastating floods) will inundate the entire universe. If you attempt to survive by swimming in that deluge, then do not neglect to take hold of *Bhagavad-gītā, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta.* Or if you cannot hold all three, then release *Bhagavad-gītā.* If necessary you may also relinquish *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* but under no circumstances release your hold on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* for if this one book remains then the flood can do no actual damage, because after it has subsided, the message of *śāstra* can be revived from *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* alone, it being the essence of all *śāstras.*[41]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī particularly stressed the importance of and often quoted from the chapter of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* outlining Lord Caitanya's instructions to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, maintaining that until a devotee becomes conversant with these he cannot obtain any information about *śuddha* Hari-*bhajana.*[42] He similarly asserted the significance of Sanātana-*śikṣā,* Lord Caitanya's teachings to Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī recorded in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā,* chapters twenty to twenty-four.[*] And he extolled the glories of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu,* Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's definitive overview of *bhakti,* which describes the meaning, purpose, and necessity for *bhakti,* and its execution in various stages, and gives an elaborate analysis of *rasa:*

> May humankind discuss *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu.* Then by dismissal of fatuity they can become actually learned. It is most regrettable that although many people are educated and take pride in considering themselves thus, they have no information of such great jewels of Vaiṣṇava scripture.[43†]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī maintained that all *siddhāntas* of the Gosvāmīs are imparted in Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura's *Prārthanā* and *Prema-bhakti-candrikā,* both of which he himself read regularly and instructed his disciples to read. He also strongly emphasized the importance of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's writings, stating that they presented the teachings of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī in a simplified manner that afforded easy entrance into the intricacies of Śrīla Jīva's *siddhāntas.* He directed his disciples to repeatedly peruse *Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta* and *Jaiva Dharma,* both of which present in cultured Bengali prose an overview of the essential teachings of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma. *Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta* progressively analyzes different genres of religious practice, beginning with "Ascertainment of the Supreme Dharma" and gradually proceeding to *rasa-vicāra. Jaiva Dharma* was a philosophical novel featuring discussion on basic topics such as the eternal nature of the soul, personal theism vis-à-vis the impersonal conception of the absolute truth, the validity of deity worship, social division by caste, proper conduct in domestic life, historical perspectives on eternal religion, methods of the soul's release from material bondage, and the theology of the holy name. Like *Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta, Jaiva Dharma* concluded with *rasa-vicāra,* culminating with esoteric revelations concerning the pinnacle of Gauḍīya achievement, the superexcellent Vraja-*bhakti-rasa.* Śrīla

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī underscored the importance of *Jaiva Dharma* in the *phala-śruti* that he composed for it:

> *jaiva-dharma' pāṭhe sei śuddha-bhakti haya*
> *jaiva-dharma' nā paḍile kabhu bhakti naya*
>
> Whoever recites *Jaiva Dharma* will attain *śuddha-bhakti.* Without reading it, there cannot be *bhakti.*

When Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura asked a *brahmacārī* engaged in *arcana* and lecturing at the Delhi Maṭha if he was regularly reading the *Gauḍīya* and *Nadia Prakash,* that devotee replied, "When I have time and there is an opportunity to study various books, I go through a little of the *Gauḍīya.*" Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura said, "Many of us do not find time for *bhagavad-bhajana.* All our time goes in *rājasika* and *tāmasika* activities, in carrying out the demands of our bodies and minds.[*] We are attacked and killed by laziness and sleep. Those who do not peruse the *Gauḍīya* can never grasp the import of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* or other *śāstras.*"

To a disciple temporarily posted in a distant land, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura explained how reading could help compensate for lack of devotional association:

> Always read the *Gauḍīya* and other writings by devotees, for that will have the same effect as hearing Hari-*kathā* directly from devotees. Even though in this world we do not meet many devotees from the spiritual world, the conversations and pastimes of the devotees of Mahāprabhu's time exist eternally in the form of books and sound, which is why we do not feel much pain from material troubles. If we live here in association with words from the spiritual world, then the memory of this association will keep us at a distance from material misery.[44]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī generally forbad his disciples to read books describing intimate *līlās,* and thus the majority of Gauḍīya Maṭha members had never even seen works such as *Gīta-govinda* and *Govinda-līlāmṛta.* Even those sections of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* describing the intimate feelings of Rādhārāṇī for Kṛṣṇa were forbidden. He wanted his disciples to come to the stage of being qualified to study these works, but the qualification was high.[*] He prognosed that a lopsided tendency toward topics of and attempted enjoyment of *rasa,* without comprehensive training in the vast philosophy underlying it, was the latent cause of the perverting of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma. Yet he also restricted disciples' access to advanced philosophical treatises such as *Ṣaṭ-sandarbha* and *Govinda-bhāṣya,* considering perusal of such works superfluous for all except the most philosophically astute and well read, who if they were to go through them, should do so not merely out of intellectual curiosity but with a specific purpose connected to the preaching mission. Furthermore, he banned almost all his disciples from reading anything from the camps of the *apa-sampradāyas.* Although certain caste Goswamis, *bābājīs,* and their followers presented accurately and convincingly much of the Gauḍīya position, and cited the same sources as did the Gauḍīya Maṭha, that they inevitably

upheld misconceptions made their persuasiveness dangerous.[†]

As a pragmatic preacher Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had imbibed the habit from Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura of regularly reading the newspaper, and in the course of speaking he sometimes quoted press reports. Yet his standard instruction to disciples was to shun newspapers as *asat-saṅga:* "You may see if anything necessary for you is there, without deeply plunging in and losing one or two hours. If you read newspapers at night you will dream of the topics they describe."[‡]

Verses

It seemed that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura knew an infinite number of *śāstrīya* verses, and from them he would cite profusely, especially when establishing points raised in conversation. In various situations that arose he often referenced pertinent verses and then explained them to devotees present. Similarly, when visiting holy places he would recount from memory appropriate *śāstrīya* passages and elucidate them. And it was not uncommon that while lecturing or discussing, he would extemporaneously recite long segments from *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* or entire Bengali songs.

Among Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's most frequently quoted verses was Lord Caitanya's quintessential *tṛṇād api sunīcena... kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ.*[*] From *Gītā,* he often cited the verses beginning *prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni* (3.27) and *sarva-dharmān parityajya* (18.66).[†]

Among the Sanskrit maxims that were mottos for Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's life, two of his favorites were *saṁsiddhir hari-toṣaṇam* (The perfection of existence is to satisfy Lord Hari)[45] and *kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ* (Always chant the names of Hari).[46‡] Time and again he cited Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's succinct definition of *śuddha-bhakti:*

> *anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyaṁ jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam*
> *ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu- śīlanaṁ bhaktir uttamā*
>
> One should favorably render transcendental loving service to the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, without desire for material profit or gain through fruitive activities or philosophical speculation. That is called pure devotional service. (Brs 1.1.11)

Commenting on this, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī stated, "The desire for anything but Kṛṣṇa is called *anyābhilāṣa. Jīvas* absorbed in desires other than for Kṛṣṇa are *anyābhilāṣī.*"[47]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī also gave much importance to another key verse from Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, recommending that it be framed and constantly viewed while unceasingly performing *harināma:*

> *ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ*
> *sevonmukhe hi jihvādau svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ*
>
> The name, form, quality, and pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are imperceivable to materially contaminated senses. To a person inclined to His service—which begins with the tongue—His transcendental name, form, quality, and pastimes are automatically revealed. (Brs 1.2.234)

He often quoted this *śloka* to stress that only by a service attitude and by no other means can Kṛṣṇa be approached.

Similarly, to warn those proud of their sensory and noetic acumen that empiricism is based on a fundamental epistemological mistake, and to establish the futility of attempting to assay the unlimited through the limited faculty of puny brains, he cited verses such as *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 3.2.3:

nāyam ātmā pravacanena labhyo
na medhasā na bahunā śrutena
yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas
tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanuṁ svām

The Supreme Lord is not perceivable by expert explanations, vast intelligence, or even much hearing. He is obtained only by one whom He Himself chooses. To such a person He manifests His own form.[48]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would quote the following verses to stress that Kṛṣṇa cannot be approached directly, but only through His representatives:

rahūgaṇaitat tapasā na yāti
na cejyayā nirvapaṇād gṛhād vā
na cchandasā naiva jalāgni-sūryair
vinā mahat-pāda-rajo-'bhiṣekam

O King Rahūgaṇa, without taking upon one's head the dust from the lotus feet of a pure devotee, one cannot attain devotional service. It is not possible to obtain devotional service simply by undergoing severe austerities and penances, gorgeously worshiping the deity, or strictly following the regulations of the *sannyāsa* or *gṛhastha* order, nor by studying the Vedas, submerging oneself in water, or exposing oneself to fire or scorching sunlight. (SB 5.12.12)

naiṣāṁ matis tāvad urukramāṅghriṁ
spṛśaty anarthāpagamo yad-arthaḥ
mahīyasāṁ pāda-rajo-'bhiṣekaṁ,
niṣkiñcanānāṁ na vṛṇīta yāvat

Unless human society accepts the dust of the lotus feet of great devotees who have nothing to do with material possessions, mankind cannot turn its attention to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. Those lotus feet vanquish all the unwanted miserable conditions of material life. (SB 7.5.32)

Particularly in the early days when residing at Vrajapattana, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī often explained to visitors the observation of Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja:

matir na kṛṣṇe parataḥ svato vā
mitho 'bhipadyeta gṛha-vratānām

adānta-gobhir viśatāṁ tamisraṁ
punaḥ punaś carvita-carvaṇānām

Because of their uncontrolled senses, persons too addicted to materialistic life make progress toward hellish conditions and repeatedly chew the already chewed. Their inclinations toward Kṛṣṇa are never aroused, either by the instructions of others, their own efforts, or a combination of both. (SB 7.5.30)

Another of the many *Bhāgavatam* verses that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī often referenced was 12.12.55:

avismṛtiḥ kṛṣṇa-padāravindayoḥ
kṣiṇoty abhadrāṇi ca śaṁ tanoti
sattvasya śuddhiṁ paramātma-bhaktiṁ
jñānaṁ ca vijñāna-virāga-yuktam

Constant remembrance of Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet destroys everything inauspicious and awards the utmost fortune. It purifies the heart and bestows devotion to the Supreme Soul, along with knowledge enriched with realization and renunciation.

He emphasized *avismṛti* (non-forgetfulness), warning that by not sticking to the principle of always remembering Kṛṣṇa, everything perverts to the spirit of mundane enjoyment.[49]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī stated that the difference between devotees and nondevotees is scientifically and philosophically demonstrated in the six points of a verse from *Padma Purāṇa:*

arcye viṣṇau śilā-dhīr guruṣu nara-matir vaiṣṇave jāti-buddhir
viṣṇor vā vaiṣṇavānāṁ kali-mala-mathane pāda-tīrthe 'mbu-buddhiḥ
śrī-viṣṇor nāmni mantre sakala-kaluṣa-he śabda-sāmānya-buddhir
viṣṇau sarveśvareśe tad-itara-sama-dhīr yasya vā nārakī saḥ

One who considers the deity of Viṣṇu to be made of stone; the guru to be an ordinary man; a Vaiṣṇava to belong to a mundane caste; water that has washed the feet of a Vaiṣṇava or the Supreme Personality of Godhead to be ordinary, even though it has the potency to destroy all evils of the Age of Kali; the holy name of the Supreme Lord or mantras dedicated to Him, which are able to destroy all sin, to be ordinary sounds; or thinks anyone or anything else to be on the same level as Viṣṇu, the supreme controller of all, is equivalent to a resident of hell.[50]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura regularly exhorted his disciples to mold their lives in accordance with Lord Kṛṣṇa's advice in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.26.26) to reject bad association, which he explained as meaning not only obvious *asat-saṅga* with gross materialists, but also subtly contaminating involvement with pseudo-devotees.[*] In the same vein, he advised that every

person aspiring for his own benefit should always remember the following verse composed by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu:[51]

niṣkiñcanasya bhagavad-bhajanonmukhasya
pāraṁ paraṁ jigamiṣor bhava-sāgarasya
sandarśanaṁ viṣayiṇām atha yoṣitāṁ ca
hā hanta hanta viṣa-bhakṣaṇato 'py asādhu

Alas, for a person who seriously desires to cross the material ocean and engage in *bhagavad-bhajana,* to see a materialist engaged in sense gratification or a woman similarly interested is more abominable than willfully drinking poison.[52]

All members of the Gauḍīya Maṭha were supposed to know Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *daśamūla* verse outlining the ten bases of *bhakti-siddhānta* specific to Gauḍīya understanding —the first concerning *pramāṇa,* the source of evidence, and the rest *prameya,* knowledge to be ascertained from that evidence:

āmnāyaḥ prāha tattvaṁ harim iha paramaṁ sarva-śaktiṁ rasābdhiṁ tad vibhinnāṁśāṁś ca jīvān prakṛti-kavalitān tad-vimuktāṁś ca bhāvāt bhedābheda-prakāśaṁ sakalam api hareḥ sādhanaṁ śuddha-bhaktiṁ sādhyaṁ tat-prītim evety upadiśati janān gaura-candraḥ svayaṁ saḥ[†]

1. The statements of *āmnāya* are the chief evidence or proof of all *tattvas.* By these statements the following topics are taught:

2. Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Absolute Truth.

3. Kṛṣṇa is naturally replete with all energies.

4. Kṛṣṇa is the ocean of *rasa.*

5. The *jīvas* are separated parts of the Lord.

6. *Jīvas* in the bound state are under the influence of matter.

7. *Jīvas* in the liberated state are free from the influence of matter.

8. Everything is different from and identical to the Lord.

9. The *jīvas'* means of elevation is to practice the precepts of pure devotion as ordained by *āmnāya-vāṇī.*

10. Pure love of Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate goal.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī often cited the famous prayer of Śrī Mādhavendra Purī, spoken

in the ecstatic mood of separation from Kṛṣṇa that afflicted Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī after His departure for Mathurā. This prayer is highly regarded by Gauḍīyas as encapsulating the essence of topmost *prema* and therefore is at the very heart of Gauḍīya ontology:

> *ayi dīna-dayārdra nātha he*
> *mathurā-nātha kadāvalokyase*
> *hṛdayaṁ tvad-aloka-kātaraṁ*
> *dayita bhrāmyati kiṁ karomy aham*
>
> O My Lord! O most merciful master! O master of Mathurā! When shall I see You again? Because of My not seeing You, My aggrieved heart has become unsteady. O most beloved one, what shall I do? (Cc 2.4.197)

Commenting on this, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī stated:

> Śrī Mādhavendra Purī sang this *mūla-mantra,* the key to that *prema* which is the only object of pursuit, the only *prayojana* of the deserving soul. He gave this gift in India. We do not know if he gave it anywhere beyond India. Any resident of India who has heard this mantra, which is the root of Caitanya Mahāprabhu's gift of Kṛṣṇa-*prema,* has attained the perfection of all goals of life. Those who have not heard it are bound in petty matters; those who have not understood the necessity of this *mūla-mantra* have wasted their human form. To sing this song of *vipralambha* is the dharma of the uncontaminated soul, our innate propensity.
>
> Even though we consider ourselves residents of Gauḍa-*deśa,* we are even now absorbed in endeavors for sense gratification! Such poverty is inexpressible in human language. For release therefrom, Śrī Mādhavendra Purī sang this cant of *vipralambha.*[53] [*]

After Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had once expounded the exquisitely high ideals aspired for by followers of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Sundarānanda Prabhu expressed doubt in his own ability to attain such a lofty status. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī replied by quoting *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.17, which assures that labors in *bhakti* are always auspicious:

> *tyaktvā sva-dharmaṁ caraṇāmbujaṁ harer*
> *bhajann apakvo 'tha patet tato yadi*
> *yatra kva vābhadram abhūd amuṣya kiṁ*
> *ko vārtha āpto 'bhajatāṁ sva-dharmataḥ*
>
> One who has forsaken his material occupations to perform Hari-*bhajana* might fall while in an immature stage, yet there is no danger of his being unsuccessful. On the other hand, a nondevotee, even if fully engaged in occupational duties, does not gain anything.

Probably his most-quoted verse, which in childhood he had seen every day hanging on a wall in Bhakti Bhavan, and which he vowed to proclaim until his last breath, was:[54]

labdhvā su-durlabham idaṁ bahu-sambhavānte
mānuṣyam artha-dam anityam apīha dhīraḥ
tūrṇaṁ yateta na pated anu-mṛtyu yāvan
niḥśreyasāya viṣayaḥ khalu sarvataḥ syāt

After many, many births and deaths, one achieves this rare human form of life, which although temporary affords an opportunity to attain the highest perfection. Thus as long as his body, which is always subject to death, has not fallen and died, a sober human being should quickly endeavor for the ultimate perfection of life. Sense gratification is available in all species of life, whereas Kṛṣṇa consciousness is possible only for a human being. (SB 11.9.29)

To emphasize that devotees should remain fixed in their devotional principles, absorbed in the bliss of *kīrtana* and not intimidated by criticism from outsiders, and that he himself ultimately did not care what ordinary people thought of him, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura often cited Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Padyāvalī* 73:

parivadatu jano yathā tathā vā
nanu mukharo na vayaṁ vicārayāmaḥ
hari-rasa-madirā-madāti-mattā
bhuvi viluṭhāmo naṭāmo nirviśāmaḥ

Let the garrulous populace say whatever they like—we shall pay them no regard. Maddened by the ecstasy of the intoxicating beverage of love for Kṛṣṇa, we shall enjoy life: romping about, rolling on the ground, and dancing in ecstasy.

Among the several verses with which Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī typically concluded lectures, one of the most common, which he called "the humble petition of the Gauḍīya Maṭha," was from Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī's *Caitanya-candrāmṛta*:[55]

dante nidhāya tṛṇakaṁ padayor nipatya
kṛtvā ca kāku-śatam etad ahaṁ bravīmi
he sādhavaḥ sakalam eva vihāya dūrāc
caitanya-candra-caraṇe kurutānurāgam

Taking straw between my teeth and falling at your feet a hundred times, I humbly submit, "O great personage, please give up all mundane knowledge that you have learned and become attached to the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu."

Another verse, from Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī's *Muktā-carita,* that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura sometimes used as an envoy to lectures was:

nāma-śreṣṭhaṁ manum api śacī-putram atra svarūpaṁ
rūpaṁ tasyāgrajam uru-purīṁ māthurīṁ goṣṭhavātīm

rādhā-kuṇḍaṁ giri-varam aho rādhikā-mādhavāśāṁ
prāpto yasya prathita-kṛpaya śrī-guruṁ taṁ nato 'smi

I bow to my *śrī-guru,* by whose causeless mercy I have received the supreme name, the divine mantra, service to the son of Śacīmātā, the association of Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, the association of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and his older brother Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, the supreme abodes of Mathurā, Vṛndāvana, Rādhā-kuṇḍa, and Govardhana Hill, and the desire for loving service to Śrī Rādhikā and Mādhava.

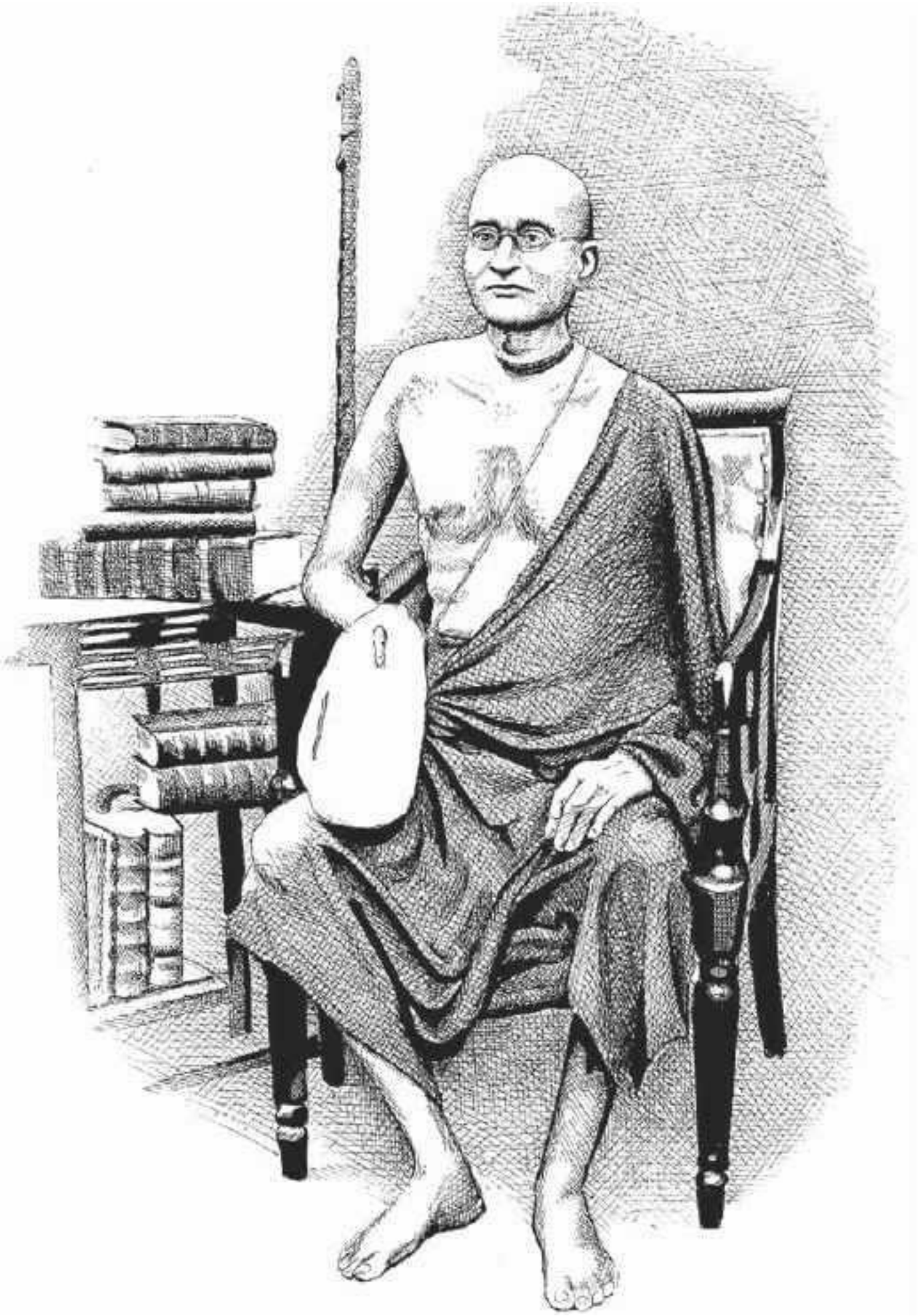
Theological Contributions

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's vast resources of *śāstrīya* knowledge far surpassed mere rote learning, for he also possessed extraordinary insight for resolving apparent discrepancies, contradictions, and arcanums within sacred texts, and for applying the message of *śāstra* in contemporary circumstances. The most apparent of his theological contributions was a thorough and detailed refutation of all contemporarily propagated misconceptions, particularly those regarding Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma, whereby he reestablished the actual path given by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu through Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. This was effected by his *dṛg-dṛśya-vicāra,* which tersely and unambiguously distinguished the genuine teachings of Lord Caitanya from others purporting to be so. And by defining and stressing *dṛg-dṛśya-vicāra* as the obligatory pre-qualification for *prema-bhakti,* he gave a sober and realistic tenor to efforts to enter that exalted realm. *Dṛg-dṛśya-vicāra* may be applied further as a natural criterion to assess all theistic creeds, by which the superiority of Lord Caitanya's teachings can be demonstrated.[*]

Another major contribution with practical application was Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's promoting of *yukta-vairāgya* (renunciation by constant and single-minded employment of oneself and all things of the world for the pleasure of Hari, without being attached to anything for personal gratification), which was inseparably linked to his promoting that preaching, especially publication of philosophically oriented and often polemic Vaiṣṇava writings, was *rāgānuga-bhakti*—indicated by his depicting a printing press within the *rāga* section of the Gauḍīya Maṭha logo.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's revelatory article "Tadvana" set forth how the words *tad-vanam ity upāsitavyam* from *Kena Upaniṣad* (4.6) indicate service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in twelve *rasas* represented by the twelve forests of Vraja.[56†] And his commentary on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* 2.12.135 similarly proffered unique insights into how Lord Caitanya's punctilious cleansing of the Guṇḍicā temple parallels the effort a devotee must make to thoroughly purify his heart of even the slightest traces of contamination.[*]

Some other original explanations by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī were: why Lord Caitanya did not accept the name Bhāratī when he took *sannyāsa,* why Nityānanda Prabhu broke Lord Caitanya's *daṇḍa,* why Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja's chariot went down, and that Ekalavya was not a great guru-*bhakta* but a fraud.[†]



The greatest devotional scholar of the modern age

Thirteen

The Great Drum

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's definition of *kīrtana* included practical activities for broadcasting Lord Caitanya's teachings, especially widespread dissemination of Hari-*kathā* and the production and distribution of transcendental literature.[*] He considered that, in and of itself, lecturing was insufficient for establishing a successful preaching mission; authoritative books were essential to systematically define and disseminate *bhakti-siddhānta* and preserve doctrinal integrity. He thus vigorously promoted publication and distribution of Kṛṣṇa conscious writings, and dubbed the printing press the *bṛhad-mṛdaṅga* (great drum), for while the sound of a *mṛdaṅga* in *kīrtana* reverberates only a short distance, the beat of the *bṛhat-mṛdaṅga* resonates throughout the world.[†]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura declared that to produce written works for the enlightenment of the general populace is real service to the Lord, and hence preferred publishing even to opening temples, exemplified by his founding a press before establishing any Maṭha. He deemed that temples are required, but mostly for the uplift of common people and neophyte devotees, whereas the business of advanced and empowered devotees is to write, publish, and widely distribute transcendental literature.[‡] Thus his major engagement was preparing writings aimed at sober and thoughtful persons, to impress upon them the depth and seriousness of the Gauḍīya message.

During a visit to the site of the nearly finished Maṭha at Bāg-bazar, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his accompanying disciples expressed delight at the prospect of preaching opportunities it would afford, yet he clarified that book production was even more vital than building temples:

> Just as externally the Gauḍīya Maṭha has erected a great palace, multiple books must be written and published to establish internal Hari-*bhajana* in this world. A temple and *kīrtana* hall for cultivation of transcendental *kīrtana,* fashioned in the form of *grantha-bhāgavata* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*) and *bhakta-bhāgavatas* (pure devotees), are more important than a temple built with bricks and stones, because by creating the former kind of temple Hari-*kathā* can be broadcast much farther on this plane. Now we have founded a seat. Notwithstanding having spent one man's entire life's earnings to build a fort for propagating *bhagavat-kathā,* even so, only if herein we protect ourselves from the association of materialists and the tumultuous welter of Kali-yuga will Hari-*kathā* be preached from this place. Only by building ideal lives and a mansion of books can the message of *bhagavad-bhakti* remain permanently in this sphere.[1]

In his essay "Mādhva-Gauḍīya Literature," Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura wrote that Gauḍīya literature is the only hope for fallen souls of this epoch, and predicted that its influence would soon spread throughout the world:

The Mādhva-Gauḍīya literature enshrines the account of the career and teachings of Śrī Caitanya and His associates from the pens of the eternal servants of the Lord. They not only rank with revealed literature of the world but furnish the only complete divine dispensation for all ages, and the specific dispensation for the present age.

The reason why the promulgation of the divine dispensation has not been followed by the establishment of unadulterated theism all over the world is to be sought in our neglect to try to understand the Gauḍīya literature by the only method of approaching the transcendental subject, viz., through the medium of the spiritual guide. The fear of being victimized by the quacks and pseudo-gurus need not trouble those who do not themselves intend to be so victimized in their quest of the absolute. It is imperatively necessary for all persons who really wish to make the spiritual acquaintance of the Gauḍīya literature to engage in the quest of bona fide Caitanyites. If they are themselves not in earnest or are disposed to be content with anything less than knowledge of the Absolute revealed by the Gauḍīya literature, they are foredoomed to failure or to fall into the hands of pseudo-gurus. But no really cautious person who knows his own mind need miss the sight of the bona fide devotee of Godhead if he is really in need of the service of the divinity.

The Gauḍīya literature will be translated into all the languages of the world by the agents of the divine mercy at the appointed time. There will also no doubt spring up a mighty host of pseudo-exponents and an immense body of spurious Gauḍīya literature, as has been the case in the past. This is to be expected by all really thoughtful persons. But nothing can have the least power of depriving a person of the mercy of the real agents of divine mercy except one's deliberate refusal to avail of the same when it will be offered at his very door in a perfectly recognizable form.

As soon as a single person will have conceived the sincere desire of undertaking the promulgation of the tidings of the Gauḍīya literature to the peoples of this world, he is thereby enrolled among the agents of divine mercy with power to forward the fulfilment of this expressed wish of the Supreme Lord. The Gauḍīya literature will not long remain confined to the Bengali-speaking people. It will in a short time expand and display its full brilliancy through the medium of all the languages, including those of birds, beasts, and the vegetable tribes.[2]

Publication and Circulation

Vaiṣṇavas in Bengal had been publishing books and magazines (although largely of dubious nature) since the early nineteenth century. Himself a prodigious author well aware of the potential of the press, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had encouraged Bimalā Prasāda's natural literary inclination and also trained him in all aspects of press skills.

At that time many seminal Gauḍīya writings remained unpublished, or had been issued only in small numbers. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had long wanted to make such works available, and he entrusted Bimalā Prasāda with this task. But when Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī suggested printing *Govinda-līlāmṛta,* Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura responded, "I'll tell you some day." When later Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī again asked about this Bhaktivinoda replied, "If you are so anxious to print it, print one copy to preserve it for posterity. It is not meant for distribution."[*] Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura felt that tremendous damage had been done by misuse of intimate Gosvāmī works and thought it better that they be destroyed than be made publicly available, considering the paucity of persons qualified to read them. Although Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī had already started preparing *Govinda-līlāmṛta* for printing, he then desisted.

Subsequently Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī requested and received Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's blessings to print Vaiṣṇava literature on an unprecedentedly large scale. But when he approached Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī for the same benediction, he was instead rebutted: "There is no one interested to properly understand such books. Better you stay in Māyāpur and do *bhajana.*" Seeing his disciple mortified and flummoxed, having been encouraged by one guru and discouraged by another, Bābājī Mahārāja conceded, "If you want to do so, use hired men. Don't waste your own time."

Desiring to print Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's commentaries on the most important *Upaniṣads,* Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī wrote to Śrī Viśvambharānanda-deva Goswami, who replied from the Śyāmasundara temple in Vṛndāvana that because the parchments had become so old and illegible, they had been committed to the sacred Yamunā River and were lost forever.

In 1914, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī began producing as installments in *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* a Vaiṣṇava almanac titled *Śrī Navadvīpa-pañjikā,* and starting from 1918 he issued it as a pocket book giving information for a full year.

After the Bhāgavata Yantra was shifted to Vrajapattana in January 1914, finances dwindled and production of devotional literature gradually came to a halt. To revive it, in July 1915 Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī transferred the press to a rented house in Krishnanagar, where they could obtain outside jobs, which was unviable in rural Māyāpur. Thereafter, funds generated were not only sufficient for publishing devotional works, but were a key source of income for maintaining and expanding Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's rudimentary mission, for undertaking projects such as excavating Rādhā-kuṇḍa in Māyāpur, and for meeting legal costs such as those

incurred in dislodging an unauthorized occupant of land in Māyāpur. To supervise and push publication efforts, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī relocated along with the printing operation, now renamed Bhāgavata Press, to Krishnanagar, where many gentlemen would visit to hear his Hari-*kathā*.

At the time of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's passing, most of his writings remained unprinted or published only serially in journals. Other than among the educated class of Calcutta and in some outlying areas he had visited, the monumental teachings of this great *ācārya* remained largely unknown. Resolving to rectify this by bringing *bhaktivinoda-vāṇī* to a wider audience both in Bengal and beyond, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī first concentrated on publishing the Ṭhākura's writings.

Considering that, like the songs of Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, those by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura express the deepest purports of *śuddha-bhakti* in simple language accessible to all, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura arranged for collections of both these *ācāryas'* compositions to be widely circulated throughout Bengal, Assam, and Orissa for the welfare of the general public. He had twenty thousand copies of *Prema-bhakti-candrikā* printed and distributed free of charge, and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's Bengali song "Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Bol" printed in Oriya script as a handbill for passing out on *nagara-saṅkīrtana,* in which Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would occasionally participate and give those leaflets to passersby.

As a major service to the previous *ācāryas,* and for the benefit of his own disciples and contemporary and future Vaiṣṇavas and scholars, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura undertook the mammoth project of publishing, with elaborate indexes and *rūpānuga* commentaries, those scriptures most important to followers of Lord Caitanya. Circa 1920 he began collecting handwritten and printed editions of *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata.* After gathering and sifting through all available extant versions, he produced with annotations a critical text, free from what he ascertained as the errors, conjectures, omissions, and interpolations typifying most current publications.[*]

In 1923, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura established the Gaudiya Printing Works in Calcutta and began fascicular publishing of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* with Bengali translation and commentary, a project that took twelve years to complete. His commentary was in two parts: *Ananta-gopāla-tathya,* selected relevant references from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* itself and other scriptures, and from the glosses of previous *ācāryas;* and *Sindhu-vaibhava-vivṛti,* his own original contribution, which was restricted to the portions of *Bhāgavatam* dealing with classic philosophical expositions. For the first verse of the book, the *vivṛti* covered twenty-two double-column pages, the total gloss filling over forty pages.[*]

Another elaborate project that he inaugurated and oversaw was preparation of an extensive index for *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta.* A team of scholarly Gauḍīya Maṭha devotees and hired Gauḍīya *paṇḍitas* labored for several months to finally produce this directory featuring as its principal subjects: alphabetical lists of verses, names of persons and places (including mountains, oceans, rivers, etc.), technical terms from *darśana-śāstra* and *rasa-śāstra,*

philosophical terms, food items, and even each noun, adjective, and adverb included in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta.* A similarly thorough index of *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* was also prepared. These two classics were also released in installments. When the commentaries, indexes, and other ancillaries were complete, they were published with the original text in inclusive volumes as massive reference works, thus forming lasting contributions to the Gauḍīya *sampradāya.*

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura regarded the founding of a new press as an important breakthrough, and celebrated such occasions with functions of Hari-*kathā* and *kīrtana*. In 1936, he installed the Paramarthi Printing Works in the compound of the Saccidānanda Maṭha, just in front of and slightly to the side of the deities, thus demonstrating a principle he repeatedly emphasized: *pāñcarātrika-mārga* (centered on *arcana*) and *bhāgavata-mārga* (centered on *śravaṇa-kīrtana,* including preaching) are to be conducted simultaneously. At the installation ceremony, from within the pressroom he explained to devotees sitting both inside and outside, "The press building, the printing machine, and the composing materials should not be considered mundane. Everything here, even the bricks and pillars, are *aprākṛta* and nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa."

The Paramarthi Printing Works had been established with a press formerly owned by Śrī Madhusūdana Sharma, an Ayurvedic doctor from Berhampur. Providentially, in 1936 Sharma had been present at a reception for Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī (en route to Madras) at Berhampur station. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had addressed the gathering of devotees, "This time I have not entered Berhampur town—only the station. My blessings to the people of Berhampur." He also requested the devotees to propagate *śuddha-bhakti* in Oriya. Madhusūdana Sharma was impressed, and upon perusing a copy of the *Paramārthī* magazine he became even more so, to the extent that when informed that it was printed at an outside press, he immediately decided to donate his own printing machine, complete with type and all other ancillary equipment.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would personally teach all aspects of printing to disciples engaged in that service, including how to compose type and make quotations for commercial jobs.[*] He was often seen in the press, overseeing operations and offering relevant advice. He personally composed the first *Gauḍīya* magazine.

Desiring to utilize the latest technology, in 1932 Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura purchased from an Indo-Swiss company a German-made electric press to replace the hand-operated machine hitherto used by the Gaudiya Printing Works.

Despite having numerous other commitments, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura always gave close attention to publication. To facilitate swift production, even when touring he had galley proofs sent to him for checking. He wanted to write and publish many further books, plus extensive commentaries on important works beginning with *Ṣaṭ-sandarbha, Sarva-saṁvādinī,* and *Govinda-bhāṣya,* but being involved in various activities he was unable.[‡] He strongly desired that an English translation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* be prepared with detailed annotations, and often lamented that he had not yet found anyone willing to totally devote himself to such a

project.[3]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura instructed that pictures of Kṛṣṇa or His devotees not be printed on the covers of publications.[‡] Nor did he want his own picture included therein. An exception was the biographical *Sarasvatī-jayaśrī,* which featured photographs of him.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī did not want that full-scale books be given for free. Thus they were sold mostly from Maṭha bookstalls or to regular subscribers of periodicals, and also to interested persons met while collecting *bhikṣā.* If a devotee were to sell even a few copies of *Nadia Prakash* at one paisa each, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would consider it a great success. But when devotees suggested to stop sending magazines to defaulting subscribers he retorted, “Are you commercially hired fools? Supply them free.”

Periodicals

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī recognized the role of the press not only in reproducing classic Vaiṣṇava literature and themes, but also in creating widespread awareness of the merit of the Vaiṣṇava position by propagating it widely through magazines. The Gauḍīya Maṭha periodicals were a mouthpiece for ventilating at least a portion of the unprecedented realizations ever emanating from what Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī described as "the volcano of thoughts" that ever flared within his being.[4] As Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had intimated to Śrī Madana-mohana Mālavīya, his heart was so rich with the desire to glorify Kṛṣṇa that he could supply enough material to produce a new magazine at every moment.[*] This desire became partially yet substantially manifest through the Gauḍīya Maṭha's producing during its heyday seven principal magazines in five major languages:

Sajjana-toṣaṇī—first brought out in Bengali by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in 1881, but discontinued due to his being reposted. In 1883 an English edition was released, and in 1885 it was again published sporadically in Bengali; not until 1892 was it produced regularly as a monthly. After its being suspended once more in 1897, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī yet again revived it in February–March 1915, shortly after Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *tirobhāva,* as the *mukha-patrī* (principal newspaper) of the Navadvīpa-dhāma-pracāriṇī Sabhā;

Gauḍīya—a Bengali weekly begun on 19 August 1922; first issued from the Bhāgavata Press, Krishnanagar, and then from the Gaudiya Printing Works (established in August 1923 in Upper Circular Road, Calcutta, and shifted in June 1935 to near the Maṭha at Bāg-bazar);

Nadia Prakash—begun in 1926 as an English-Bengali semiweekly; later became a Bengali daily;[†]

Harmonist—begun in June 1927 as an English monthly; later issued fortnightly;

Bhāgavata—a Hindi fortnightly begun in 1931; published from Paramahaṁsa Maṭha, Naimiṣāraṇya, on each new-moon and full-moon day;

Kīrtana—an Assamese monthly begun in 1932; published from Goalpara Prapannāśrama, Assam;

Paramārthī—an Oriya fortnightly begun in 1932 and published from Saccidānanda Maṭha, Cuttack; printed at Saccidānanda Maṭha upon establishment of the Paramarthi Printing Works there in 1936.[*]

The *Gauḍīya* was a larger and more frequent successor of the *Sajjana-toṣaṇī,* whose Bengali edition was subsequently discontinued. In its first two years the *Gauḍīya* featured both spiritual and secular insights and news; thereafter it focused solely on transcendental matters. As did other Gauḍīya Maṭha magazines, the *Gauḍīya* fulfilled the purpose of the former *Sajjana-toṣaṇī*

by defining, establishing, and broadcasting *śuddha-bhakti* in a manner that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had circumstantially been restricted from doing in the original *Sajjana-toṣaṇī*.[†] Being the Gauḍīya Maṭha's most widely circulated and respected periodical, within which many of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's classic essays first appeared, the *Gauḍīya* defined the message of the Mission, set the standard for all Gauḍīya Maṭha magazines by its highly intellectual tenor, and profoundly influenced the Mission's development. In the first year, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī contributed profusely, with fifty-nine articles, but gradually he turned over to his disciples the responsibility for providing content. As more volumes were released, the *Gauḍīya* gradually expanded to become a veritable encyclopedia of spiritual topics. Its intensely philosophical, didactic, and polemic (rather than affective) style was reflected in its index for the eighth to fourteenth years, wherein the first topic, listed even before lectures of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, was *vibhinna-matavāda-khaṇḍana* (refutal of various theories) and had several hundred entries, whereas "Rādhā-*caritra*" (the activities and characteristics of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī) had only four, those being renderings of classic poems. In the first edition of its fifteenth year, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī commented, "The *Gauḍīya* has been singing of the inconceivable beauty of Goloka. For the last fourteen years it has served the Gauḍīya Mission with great determination, just as Lakṣmaṇa served Rāma." An advertisement for the *Gauḍīya* that was regularly run in early issues of the *Harmonist* stated:

> The journal deals exclusively with problems that arise in connection with all sincere endeavors for realizing the transcendental truth. The methods of investigation, proof, narration, and instruction as found in the *Vedas, Vedānta, Upaniṣads, Mahābhārata, Gītā, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Purāṇas, Tantras, Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata,* and other śāstric works as realized in practice by devotees are presented in concrete and attractive forms and with critical impartiality so as to make them intelligible to the ordinary reader. The paper offers a thoroughly practical exposition of the *śuddha-bhāgavata-dharma* in all aspects and contains careful answers to questions on the subject addressed to the editor.

That the *Gauḍīya* fully represented Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and his *vāṇī* and was therefore essential to the mission and its individual members—yet that its message would never be accepted by nondevotees—was summarized in the *Harmonist:*

> The *Gauḍīya,* which is the mouthpiece of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, speaks to the world with the voice of Śrīla Sarasvatī Mahārāja. In order to form any true conception of the personality of the spiritual head and founder of the Gauḍīya Maṭha one should pore over the illuminating pages of that unique periodical. The point of view and method of exposition of the *Gauḍīya* are unapproachable in respect of their loyalty to and spiritual insight into the complete bearing of the *sanātana-dharma,* eternal function of all unalloyed souls.[*]
>
> The *Gauḍīya* worships, in its own pregnant words, at the shrine of the *bhaktisiddhānta-vāṇī* (lit., the utterances of the *ācārya* which are the language of realization of the principle

of unalloyed service of the Absolute). Śrīla Sarasvatī Mahārāja's words are the language of devotion herself.

> The inmates of the Gauḍīya Maṭhas find it possible to commune with their divine master only through the ear. They are always eager to listen to the words of the master and his disciples. They find the *Gauḍīya* to be the living word of the master. The inmates of the Gauḍīya Maṭha and its offshoots literally *(sic)* hung upon the utterances of their divine master. They find nothing more attractive and more inspiring than the slightest word of the *ācārya.* This is the reason why the *Gauḍīya* is read with absorbing attention by every one of them. They always find in the *Gauḍīya* the answer to their spiritual questionings. The *Gauḍīya* is, as it were, the light to guide their steps on the path of unadulterated service. In the columns of the *Gauḍīya* they catch the sound of the well-known voice of their master. They like no other direction except that of the *Gauḍīya.* They peruse the words of the *Gauḍīya,* think on them, and convey them to those who come to them for learning the tidings of the Gauḍīya Maṭha at the first hand.
>
> But what does the world outside the Gauḍīya Maṭhas think of the *Gauḍīya*? They find the *Gauḍīya* unanswerable and terribly uncompromising. It always calls the spade a spade. It is battering down all the barriers of ancient superstitions and misunderstandings with a pitiless penetrating vigor that is almost unbearable to those who are not unusually well-prepared for complete disillusionment. The entire field of Hindu religious beliefs and practices have been surveyed and assessed at their proper spiritual valuation by this constructive critic of *sanātana-dharma*—who is undeterred by fear or favor in the scrupulous performance of his duty as the accepted instrument of the *ācārya* for effecting the spiritual awakening of this sophisticated age.[5]

Nadia Prakash was launched in March 1926 as a twice-weekly magazine, with both an English and a Bengali edition. From February 1928 it was re-titled *Dainik* (daily) *Nadia Prakash* and thereafter ran for sixteen years as a Bengali daily divided into two parts: *prākṛta-jana-pāṭhya,* suitable reading for materialists, and *harijana-pāṭhya,* suitable reading for devotees. Mostly it was typeset in two distinct and easily separable sections, of which devotees retained in their files only the *harijana-pāṭhya*. The mundane portion was meant to attract general readers, and even though it contained devotional views on worldly matters, reading thereof was often discouraged in the purely devotional section. The *prākṛta-jana-pāṭhya* was advertised in the *Harmonist:*

> It supplies information of every description about agriculture, trade, industry, health, education, religion, society, proceedings of Nadia District and union boards, etc., besides news of the outside world.[6]

The masthead bore the anglicized spelling "The Daily Nadia Prakash" along with the Bengali version, and announced itself as *viśve ekmātra dainik pāramarthik patra* (the only daily spiritual newspaper in the universe). Serving both as the sole local newspaper for Nadia District and as a unique spiritual broadside, *Nadia Prakash* was popular among pious and discerning

persons throughout Bengal. Each day packs of fresh copies were dispatched to outlying cities and towns. Several *brahmacārīs* were engaged in delivering it to regular subscribers, offering it to first-time readers, and canvassing for new subscribers.

The *Harmonist* began in 1927 as an English metamorphosis of *Sajjana-toṣaṇī,* with that original name kept as the main title during the *Harmonist's* first two years, and thereafter retained as a secondary heading. In those first two years the *Harmonist* also featured a Sanskrit section and an occasional short piece in Hindi. Whereas the *Gauḍīya* was oriented toward individuals with background knowledge of Gauḍīya philosophy and culture, the *Harmonist* was intended particularly for persons educated according to Western values and outlook, and also served the needs of intellectual non-Bengali followers of the Gauḍīya Maṭha. The title aimed at attracting those intellectuals anxious to allay the disquiet of a troubled world, and the content addressed the necessity of *śuddha-bhakti* as the only mainstay of genuine harmony. Featured in the *Harmonist* were many original articles, seriate translations of *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* and *Śaraṇāgati,* occasional translations of important pieces from the *Gauḍīya,* and a section giving news of Gauḍīya Maṭha activities, which portion considerably expanded upon the landing of devotees in England. After June 1933, production was stopped, reviving again with a new format in September 1934 as a fortnightly issued every Ekādaśī.

Due to lack of competent writers in Hindi, the *Bhāgavata* consisted largely of translated *Gauḍīya* articles alongside scraps of news about Gauḍīya Maṭha activities. Probably this was also the case for the *Kīrtana.*

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura gave much importance to his magazines and engaged several outstandingly erudite disciples in writing for them. But although these journals were published under his instruction and with his name as editor, he did not personally oversee their production. The most important and influential of them, the *Gauḍīya* and the *Harmonist,* were edited by Sundarānanda Prabhu and Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu respectively, with Vāsudeva Prabhu unofficially supervising them.

By modern standards these publications were not very attractive in appearance. Coarse paper and hand-set type, sometimes blotchy, was embellished with a little simple artwork, interspersed with a few indistinct photographs and one or two secular advertisements. Notwithstanding their unsophisticated getup, the veracity and power of their message reverberated throughout religious and scholarly circles as a periodical hammering against untruth, half-truths, and especially falsity posing as truth, and did much to enhance the prestige of the Gauḍīya Maṭha and convince intellectuals of its authenticity. For example, when in October 1922 the Vaiṣṇava dignitary Śrī Madhusūdana Goswami of Vṛndāvana was presented some copies of the *Gauḍīya* by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, he expressed pleasure at its high level of discourse and predicted that it would become the most authoritative publication in the Gauḍīya world. And when the *Gauḍīya* featured an article criticizing some of the ideas of the famous and respected Dr. Dineśa-candra Sena, that professor was so impressed by its literary standard that he responded with a letter of commendation to its author.

Content and Temper of Articles

> The object of the new spiritual fortnightly [*Paramārthī*] is the propagation of the Absolute Truth by the complete scriptural method, viz., positive presentation rendered intelligible and insured against gross misunderstanding by the method of criticism of the malinterpretations and malpractices of ignorant and designing persons.[7]

By providing responses to frequently broached contentions, by addressing philosophical and behavioral issues germane to contemporary society, by confuting malicious speculations about and printed inculpations against Vaiṣṇava dharma in general—and in particular, the Gauḍīya Maṭha and its founder—and by providing news of preaching activities, articles served to educate both the public and the Gauḍīya Maṭha devotees and to complement the widespread lecturing and other outreach initiatives of the mission.[*]

At that time various scholars, authors, and journalists in Bengal and Orissa thought it chic to attempt to discredit Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His divine associates, and the Vedic writings and pursuant literature, especially those particularly revered by Gauḍīyas. Slavishly aping their Western patriarchs in dress, speech, mannerisms, and thought, these deluded academics penned sundry theses on the supposed immorality, historical inauthenticity, internal contrariety, and innumerable other imagined faults of the Vedic and Vaiṣṇava classics. This malicious misinformation threatened to undercut the very foundation of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma. Hence, considering the written word the best medium of response to the constant articulate assault on all that he lived for, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura put his magazines in the forefront of the counterattack, to unrelentingly and unapologetically substantiate that every detail of everything he taught and practiced was in every respect perfect. Whenever he encountered such spiteful anti-propaganda he became furious like a lion. He would call his disciples and order them to refute the allegations, giving them an outline of the essential points and how to articulate them. Those rebuttals were so notoriously strong that many writers eventually stopped composing such contrary articles for fear of retribution from the Gauḍīya Maṭha.

An express function of the *Gauḍīya* was to refute the streams of accusations against Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His *sampradāya* that spewed forth from the envious academics and, by so doing in an indisputably scholarly manner and language, to simultaneously disprove the common claim that Vaiṣṇavas are unscholarly.[8] Yet while these magazines unreservedly and extensively highlighted philosophical controversies, they avoided discussion of political affairs, and were largely silent about internal disputes within the Gauḍīya Maṭha if of organizational rather than philosophical nature.[*]

An example of meeting challenges was the response to Dr. S.K. De's paralogical article "Chaitanya As an Author" featured in the *Indian Historical Quarterly.*[†] Head of the Department of Sanskrit at Dacca University, Dr. De was an internationally reputed academic with interests in several fields, yet being blinded by the pride of learning he was a despiser of Vaiṣṇavas. Within mundane learned circles he had much contributed to the perpetuation of

misconceptions concerning Lord Caitanya and His followers, accusing them in "Chaitanya As an Author" of misguided zeal, paucity of intellectual acumen, puerility, sentimentality, speculation, and so on. In response, a detailed refutation was published in two parts (the first on 5 January 1935), in two successive editions of the *Gauḍīya,* pointing out that many scholars of Dr. De's ilk had imbibed the knack of couching in superficially respectful language highly erroneous, offensive, and invidious statements about Lord Caitanya, and under a cover of assumed neutrality had attempted to misdescribe the entire Gauḍīya *sampradāya* as a bunch of fanatics with occasional academic pretensions that fell far short of the consummate sophistication of savants like themselves.[9] Later the *Harmonist* ran a frontpage review of that article, trashing Dr. De's misguided zeal, paucity of intellectual acumen, puerility, sentimentality, speculation, and so on, noting:

> As the point of view of Dr. De does not reach even the level of the ordinary, consistent, dogmatic, empiric attitude toward religion, we may take this opportunity of reminding our readers that the refutation of the untenable conclusions of empiricists regarding religion has been one of the thankless tasks of this journal for the last half a century.[10*]

A recurrent theme in Gauḍīya Maṭha articles was the delineation of pure theism in contrast to prevalent vitiated or mixed forms. This did not go unchallenged. A protracted exchange developed with Dr. Rādhā-Govinda Nātha of the Nityānanda-*vaṁśa*, a respected scholar with dozens of publications to his name, a champion of the "old school" who through his periodical, *Sādhanā,* without directly mentioning the Gauḍīya Maṭha or any of its members, eruditely sought to nullify the mission's position and especially its apparent innovations—to which the *Gauḍīya* editor, Sundarānanda Prabhu, replied anonymously and without citing Dr. Nātha's name or publication. In February 1928 the *Gauḍīya* (6.436) published a short notice under the heading "Exhibition of Forgiveness by Servitors of the Gauḍīya Maṭha":

> In the presence of the honorable fourth presidency magistrate of Joḍa-bāgan in Calcutta, the editor of *Sādhanā,* Śrī-yukta Rādhā-Govinda Nātha, and its printer, were directed to unconditionally withdraw defamatory and false allegations they had made in *Sādhanā* against servants of the Gauḍīya Maṭha and express regret, upon complying with which they were acquitted.

When Rabindranath Tagore issued some articles under a pseudonym, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura also used a fictitious name in countering Tagore's erroneous propositions.

An Oriya magazine article advocating the necessity of being a *gṛhastha* before adopting *sannyāsa,* in clear criticism of Gauḍīya Maṭha practice, was read to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura at the Saccidānanda Maṭha. Flaring up, he called Jati Śekhara Prabhu and dictated to him in Bengali, ordering him to transpose into Oriya: "This is not supported by *śāstra*! Why should a *brahmacārī* become entangled in material life? Why must he become a householder? Why can't he take *sannyāsa*? A *brahmacārī* must be a sannyasi! Whenever the requisite consciousness becomes manifest in a person he should accept *sannyāsa.*" Upon finishing he asked Jati Śekhara Prabhu to read back to him what was written, then directed that it be edited and

published in the *Paramārthī* with the title "Maṭha o Āśrama."[*]

To demonstrate that the Gauḍīya Maṭha message was not cramped within a narrow religious orbit but relevant to all facets of modern life, from July 1935 the *Harmonist* featured a series of analyses with the titles "Gauḍīya Maṭha and Politics," "Gauḍīya Maṭha and Caste System," "Gauḍīya Maṭha and History" (on historiography), "Gauḍīya Maṭha and Eugenics," "Gauḍīya Maṭha and Law," "Gauḍīya Maṭha and Trade and Commerce," and "Gauḍīya Maṭha and Science."[†]

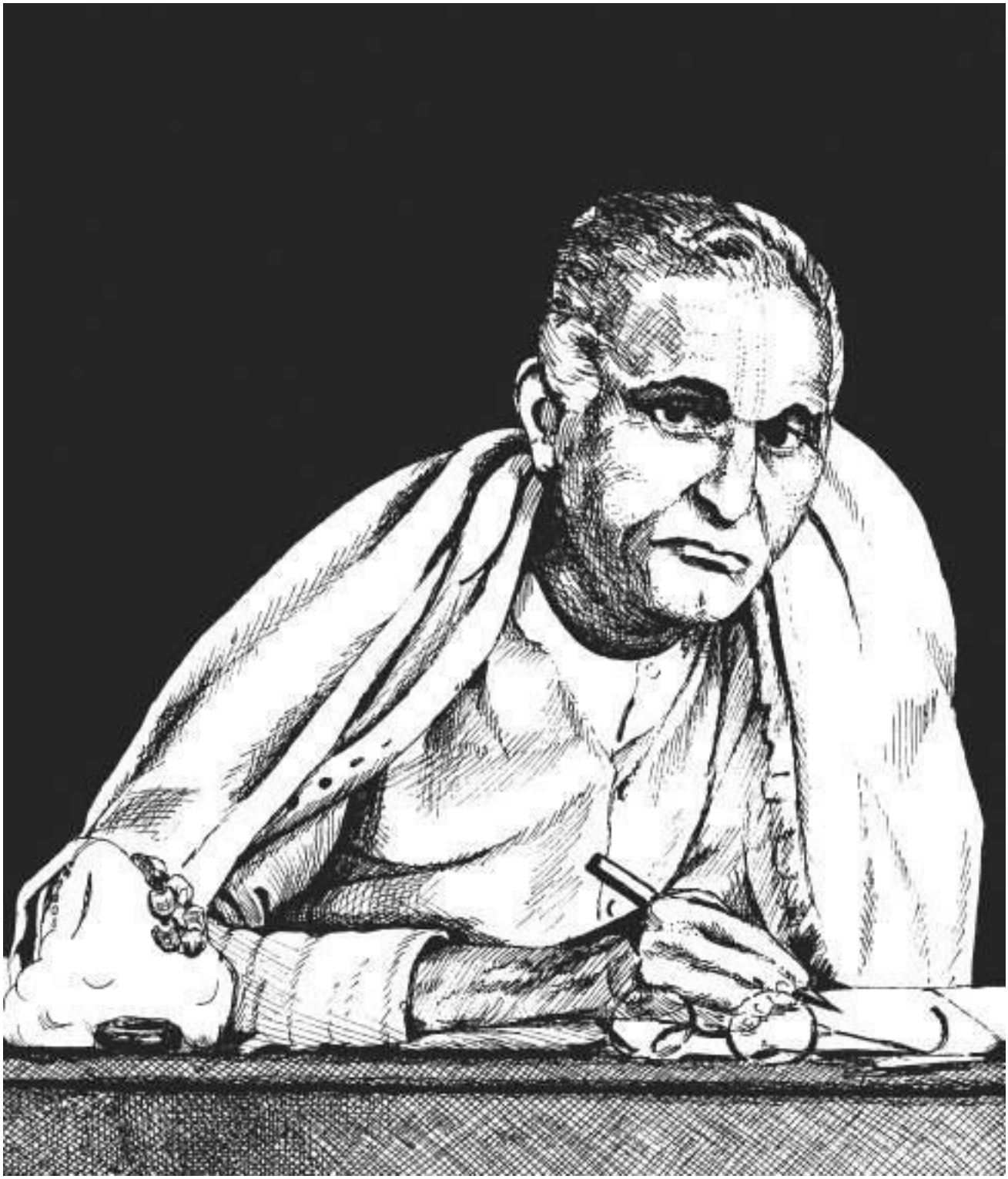
Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura expressly forbad that articles describing intimate pastimes such as *rāsa-līlā* be featured in periodicals meant for public distribution.[11]

Many articles were redacted from discourses by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura that were transcribed by competent devotees, especially Praṇavānanda Prabhu, and sometimes Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda and Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhus. Although they could not collect all the streams of nectar cascading from Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's lotus mouth, they speedily jotted down in note form the main points. Several of these digests were later transposed (generally by Praṇavānanda Prabhu) into drafts, and reshaped by Sundarānanda Prabhu into workable essays.[*] Those were sent to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura for checking and further refining, at which stage he occasionally dubbed in additional points. Vāsudeva Prabhu would perform the final editing and then the articles were sent to the press. A few especially significant lectures of leading disciples were likewise transcribed, edited, and published in Gauḍīya Maṭha magazines.

Often when Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura felt inspired to address a particular topic, he would dictate his thoughts to a scholastic disciple, usually one of the aforementioned three devotees, and have him furnish it in literary form. He reviewed many articles before publication and gave tips on how to improve them.[†]

The Transcendental Proofreader

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī insisted that all published articles be free from spelling mistakes, and would reprimand the disciples responsible if he noticed any. He similarly scrutinized statements and creeds to detect and expose their minutest defects, the basis of each being the same: antagonism toward acceptance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's supreme overlordship. He pronounced, “I don't read the book, I read the author. I first check whether the author is authentic. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura trained me in proofreading, so I always look for what is right or wrong. But I am not a proofreader of the press only; I am a proofreader of the world. I proofread men; I proofread religions. I dissect their faults and try to correct them.”[12]



He once received a letter from Jati Śekhara Prabhu addressed to "Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Bāgh Bazar, Calcutta" and upon later meeting him chided, "It is not Bāgh (tiger). There is no tiger in Bāg-bazar. Also, you should write it as one word: Bāg-bazar, not Bāg Bazar."[*]

Writing

Writing was central to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's being. By the age of eleven he had penned his first book, *Prahlāda-caritra,* a five-chapter versified description of the transcendental character of Prahlāda Mahārāja.[†] In his youth he systematically acquired a wealth of spiritual and related cultural knowledge, which was at least partially distributed through his copious writings—compositions that ranged over broad areas of religious thought, revealed much knowledge that had become obscure, analyzed and refuted innumerable objections to Gauḍīya *siddhānta,* resolved many contentious and intricate points, and moreover were enriched with his extraordinary realizations. Despite having multiple obligations, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura left a legacy of dozens of in-depth and thoroughly researched essays, some poems, three full-length commentaries on major scriptures, and a number of other books, including the compilation of a devotional encyclopedia and an autobiography.[‡]

Of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's several poems and songs, most of which were in Bengali, some were independent works—a few for inscriptions in temples, a number as *āśīrvāda-patras* (Sanskrit eulogiums) of disciples, and others as *maṅgalācaraṇas* or as envoys of commentaries on seminal Gauḍīya works. Particularly the latter category, in a manner typical of poesy, featured certain subtle statements hinting at but not explicitly stating various esoteric points.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura penned numerous letters answering queries of disciples and others. Often he encouraged disciples to continue with the basic practices of Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti,* especially chanting of the holy names with faith and studying Vaiṣṇava literature. Sometimes he apologized for tardiness in reply due to being busy or indisposed:

> I have received your missive dated Padmanābha 5. Due to lack of time I feared writing an extended letter, yet I see how the delay prolongs, so now I write in brief. I was very happy to learn that you have come to understand that everything is auspicious when Kṛṣṇa's holy name is chanted with perseverance. When material thoughts come while you are chanting the holy name, do not become slack in your chanting. Gradually, as a secondary effect of uttering the name, such useless thoughts will naturally be removed; you do not have to be occupied with that. The result cannot be achieved in the very beginning. With the rise of great pleasure in chanting Kṛṣṇa's name, the lure of mundane thoughts will diminish. How will materialistic consciousness depart but by eager acceptance of the holy name? If one serves *śrī-nāma* with body, mind, and words, then *śrī-nāmī* will reveal His all-auspicious form.[13]

Through correspondence Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī gave spiritual infusion and instruction to the farflung members of his burgeoning movement, many of whom were struggling to preach and establish the mission in taxing circumstances. He wrote to disciples in London:

> Though we are distantly placed by the will of providence, still the symbolic sounds in letters will not keep us at such a distance. One does not receive a letter from the Supreme

Lord. We hear about Him only from His devotees, and our news can also be sent to Him through His devotees. Such communication took place long before telegrams, airmail, or radio.[14]

Within his letters were revealed several intricate points of Vaiṣṇava philosophy and ontology not discussed elsewhere. Some missives conveyed scathing chastisement. Others were wholly inspiriting:

The very language of your communication, which is soft with humility and lively with *bhakti,* is a reflection of your great heart and your Hari-*sevā.* Śrī Śrī Gaurasundara is especially merciful to the humble and helpless. Many of us have become extremely pleased in perceiving your humble demeanor, gentle nature, devotion to Bhagavān, and inclination for Hari-*sevā* with indifference to the world. I am also praying at the lotus feet of Śrīman Mahāprabhu that your enthusiasm for Hari-*sevā* may increase day by day, and that you may be respected by everyone, progress in spiritual life, and worship the Lord continuously. All the devotees here are offering homage to you. I will be very pleased to know that by the mercy of the Lord you are chanting *harināma* without any obstacles.[15]

Fourteen

Use of Language

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's idiolect revealed a scholarship so lucid, multi-faceted, and insightful that no one who even briefly heard him or spoke with him could fail to be impressed. His speech conveyed a powerful transcendental message yet was often so erudite and elaborate, and his vocabulary so technical, high-flown, and elliptic, that it was exceedingly difficult even for well-educated persons to comprehend. For instance, in English he employed words such as *anthropomorphism, apotheosisism, cathonitheism, euhemerism, henotheism, psilanthropism, phytomorphism, therianthropism, theriomorphism,* and *zoomorphism* to distinguish various genera of errancy regarding the nature of God. Thus usually only his disciples, having grown familiar with his phraseology, could largely grasp what he was saying. He himself commented that his speech was graspable solely by individuals imbrued with the same attitude of Hari-*sevā* that constituted the very substance and purpose of his talking, thus indicating that his linguistic manner was not adopted merely as a preaching ploy, but was his eternal ecstasy of *vāṇī-kīrtana* and nondifferent from him. The more intellectual among his disciples gradually also imbibed his mode of speaking and writing in a diction so sophisticated and philosophically profound as to win the admiration of secular intellectuals, notwithstanding their allergy to the message conveyed.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura often mentioned and apologized for his reconditeness. At the beginning of one lecture he requested the audience to overlook any austereness in his rhetoric because by long habit he had been "tied to that method."[1] In a letter he wrote: "I am quite incapable of expressing myself in articulate language. Sometimes I remain silent only because I am incapable of making everyone understand everything."[2] Similarly: "I have so little command over the languages of mankind that it takes me a long time to make them understand a single topic of mine. Thus I have to speak constantly and a good deal."[3] Again, he stated at the beginning of a Bengali lecture, "I do not properly know any language. Even in Bengali I lack the ability to frame ideas in a simple and lucid manner, and therefore I beg forgiveness if anyone finds it unintelligible"; and in another lecture, "I am not a scholar of worldly poetics or literature, and do not know mundane lexicography or grammar, so possibly you will find my expression difficult or ungrammatical. Still, I have a great desire to impart to you whatever I have heard from my *gurudeva* concerning Śrī Caitanya." In the conclusion of an extensive letter in which he defined *vigraha* as "Personality of the Absolute Godhead in His analytic and synthetic manifestations," he wrote: "May the complexity of my language not touch you, but if you can capture its purpose, that will enable you to be considered among the class of *mahā-puruṣas* freed from mundane designations."[4]

Once when Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was speaking, some learned people present asked on whose authority he was applying so many unconventional meanings to words. He replied that his dictionary was his guru's lotus feet. Another time, in mixed frustration and snideness a

scholar said to him, "When you send me the *Gauḍīya,* also include your own dictionary so I can figure it out." Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura responded:

> Come and associate with us. Hear, chant, and perform *bhajana* with us, and all meanings will automatically manifest in your heart just like water gushing from a spring. Actually it is very easy to grasp, but it seems hard to persons of cluttered intelligence. This is the language of Vaikuṇṭha, so if you want to go there you have to learn its idiom, just as you would have to learn English to prepare to go to England. Also required for going to a foreign country is its currency, without which you cannot do anything there; you can procure it by exchanging money of the country in which you now reside. So while in this wordly situation, make the most of it by earning funds to be exchanged for spiritual goods whereby you may be eternally benefitted.[5]

When among less educated people, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī spoke in relatively simple language. Yet the conceptions he spoke of still tended to be far above the heads of all but the highly spiritually astute.

His Bengali and Hindi were so intertwined with Sanskrit as to be largely incomprehensible except to those few possessed of traditional schooling in such subjects. Despite not knowing Bengali, the South Indian *paṇḍita* Śrī Adamāra Viṭṭhalācārya, who at Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's behest lived for two years at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, could grasp the gist of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's speaking because it was so Sanskritized and *śāstrīya.*

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's argot was hard not only for people to comprehend, but also for many to tolerate, as his modus operandi was *bhidyate hṛdaya-granthiś chidyante sarva-saṁśayāḥ* —piercing the knot of material attachments in the heart and slashing all misgivings—and he continually employed pejoratives while berating the position of nondevotees and pseudo-devotees.[6] He addressed this twofold difficulty inherent in his language in his reply to a letter:

> He whom you have guessed to be the author of articles in *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* other than "Duḥsaṅga" did indeed personally write them. His language is eternally hard.[*] Consummate the lack of such hardness in your own charming linguistic style and in this way effect actual benefit for human society. By repeated study [of such articles] you will also cultivate such a disposition and then see how such hard language is converted into soft.[7]

At that time, like much else in India and particularly Bengal, languages and their usage were undergoing considerable change. Until recent centuries Sanskrit had been the universal medium of Hindu learning, philosophy, and culture, but due to restraints on teaching it to lower classes, and the extremely complex nature of its grammar, both Sanskrit and the knowledge enshrined within it remained available exclusively to a limited elite. Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura's Bengali classic *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata,* written shortly after the departure of Lord Caitanya and delineating His pastimes, had heralded a forthcoming cornucopia of charmingly simple vernacular literature from numerous Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava authors, which contributed both to the

efflorescence of Bengali as a uniquely expressive and poignant yet uncomplicated idiom, and to the catholicity of Lord Caitanya's movement. Yet an effect of this down-to-earth presentation was the gradual divorce of the religion of the masses from its philosophical basis, which being encoded in elaborate Sanskrit exegetical works was inaccessible to the common man. In the wake of modern education conducted primarily in English and also increasingly in Bengali, by the late nineteenth century Sanskrit and the obscurantism connected with it had become sidelined. With the ascendancy of English as the lingua franca of India's new educated classes, the Bengali of the intelligentsia developed as a distinct and respected genre significantly influenced by the usability, flexibility, and broad scope of English. In response to these trends, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had pioneered in both Bengali and English the exposition of Vaiṣṇava philosophy in modern format. As noted in the *Harmonist:*

> Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda possessed a style that is easy, invigorating, cheerful, lucid, and uniform, and enriched with the fresh wealth of an ample vocabulary culled from the inexhausible storehouse of Sanskrit and adapted into Bengali in a natural way. The Bengali language in the hands of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda has thus been transformed into a powerful vehicle for the conveyance of the sublimest and the most highly philosophical truths of religion, with an ease and precision that makes his works highly interesting and at the same time perfectly intelligible to the most ordinary reader, including women and children.[8]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī followed Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in referring to the transcendental Bengali of Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* as Gauḍīya-*bhāṣā,* thus distinguishing it from the diglossia of *calita-bhāṣā* (colloquial Bengali) and the more elegant literary form *sādhu-bhāṣā* —both of which, being born of mundane consciousness, were employed for describing (and were incapable of going beyond) the phenomena, experiences, and concepts of the material world. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī extolled Gauḍīya-*bhāṣā* as an aid in achieving the supreme perfection:

> Gauḍīyas are not only residents of Gauḍa. With the help of Gauḍīya-*bhāṣā,* they become expert in the language of the eternally liberated inhabitants of Goloka and thus understand themselves as associates of the Lord.[9]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura further dubbed Gauḍīya-*bhāṣā,* especially the Sanskritized form linguistically akin to *sādhu-bhāṣā,* as *bhāgavatīya-bhāṣā* (the lexicon of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *bhāgavatas*) and established it as the standard for the *Gauḍīya* and other publications.[*] Like other higher forms of Indian vernaculars, this level of Bengali was directly derived from Sanskrit and lent itself to interposition with it, a technique that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura brilliantly utilized as he seamlessly interlarded Sanskrit words, phrases, and grammatical usage with Bengali, often in long complex sentences with long complex compounds, importing much phraseology from *śāstra*—for instance, *dvitīyābhiniveśata janita bhaya* (fear born of absorption in that not directly related to Kṛṣṇa), derived from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.2.37. Another case of Sanskritization, as seen in the writings of previous Bengali religious and philosophical

writers and also employed in *bhāgavatīya-bhāṣā,* was the adjoining of feminine adjectives to Bengali nouns that in Sanskrit are feminine, thus differing from standard Bengali, which is largely gender-neutral and admits only the male forms of Sanskrit adjectives—for example, rendering the phrases *vaiṣṇava dīkṣā* and *śāśvata śānti* (eternal peace) of standard Bengali as the *vaiṣṇavī dīkṣā* and *śāśvatī śānti* of Sanskrit and Sanskritized Bengali.

He similarly referred to *vaiṣṇavocita-bhāṣā* (language appropriate for Vaiṣṇavas)—the established usage that delineates the transcendental position of Viṣṇu and His devotees—by for instance referring to the *āvirbhāva* and *tirobhāva* of Vaiṣṇavas, who, to obey the Lord's will, manifest in the world through the agency of His internal potency, in contradistinction to conditioned souls' birth and death, which, as karmic reactions, are forced upon them by the Lord's external potency. *Vaiṣṇavocita-bhāṣā* further requires that the apparent sickness of devotees be expressed as "exhibiting the pastime of illness" or similarly. Although sometimes disparaged as flowery, the glory of *vaiṣṇavocita-bhāṣā* lies in the outlook inherent to it, whose reward is promised by Śrī Kṛṣṇa:

> *janma karma ca me divyam evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ*
> *tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma naiti mām eti so 'rjuna*
>
> O Arjuna, one who knows the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains My eternal abode. (Bg 4.9)

Emulating Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī and other *ācāryas,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's selection and defining of words was so precise as to render his writings impossible to misinterpret. His profuse use of adjectives such as *cinmaya* (spiritually conscious), *aprākṛta, prākṛta,* and *jaghanya* (abominable), for distinguishing between spiritual and material phenomena, underscored his points and contributed to the length of his sentences. His literary constructs were otherwise marked by the gravity of orthodox Bengali, bypassing the modernization and trendy colloquialisms that were radically altering the language.

Of the innumerable names of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura generally used Kṛṣṇa and Hari. But according to context or his own mood, he employed many others—for instance, distinguishing Kṛṣṇa from His expansion Nārāyaṇa by calling Them Rādhā-kānta and Lakṣmī-kānta respectively.* He most often referred to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu as Gaurasundara, yet also by a variety of names, including Mahāprabhu, Śrīman Mahāprabhu, Caitanya-deva, Gaurāṅga, and Gaura. Usually he referred to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī as Vārṣabhānavī, Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī, or Vṛṣabhānu-jā, all of which indicated Her to be the daughter of Mahārāja Vṛṣabhānu and were modes of address suitable to be uttered by one in an intimate yet respectful relationship with Her.

Following in the tradition of renowned *ācāryas* and *paṇḍitas,* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura drew on the extraordinary richness and multivalency of Sanskrit to reveal seemingly unlimited meanings and depth of meaning in the statements of *śāstra.* It was as if he could prepare a book about

each line, word, and syllable.[†]

He carefully defined philosophical terms such as *advaya-jñāna, tattva,* and the five levels of perception outlined by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura: *pratyakṣa* (knowledge received through the senses), *parokṣa* (knowledge received from others based on their *pratyakṣa;* the body of knowledge consisting of the collective sense-perceptory experience of the human race), *aparokṣa* (intuition or realization based on *pratyakṣa* and *parokṣa,* or beyond *pratyakṣa* and *parokṣa,* leading to and only as far as impersonal realization of the Absolute), *adhokṣaja* (transcendental knowledge, from above the plane of mundane perception and speculation, surpassing *pratyakṣa, parokṣa,* and *aparokṣa,* leading to and only as far as Vaikuṇṭha realization), and *aprākṛta,* full-fledged spiritual knowledge, of the Supreme Lord's Vraja pastimes of intimate love.[‡] *Adhokṣaja* being an appellation of the Supreme Lord, indicating Him who reserves the prerogative of being immeasurable by mundane senses, mind, and intelligence, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura greatly stressed the significance of this name and instructed, "Wherever you see this word in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* you should repeatedly underline it. It is most important, the only index."[10]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī made wide use of traditional proverbs and sayings, often citing them with a Kṛṣṇa conscious twist. He often quoted the Bengali saying *āra kāli kene?* (Why tomorrow?) and from Sanskrit, *tūrṇaṁ yateta* (Immediately take to spiritual life) and *saṅge śaktiḥ kalau yuge* (In Kali-yuga strength is derived from association)."[11*] He used the English phrase "lord it over" to describe the attitude of conditioned souls toward all they survey. And he regularly made points through pithy rhymes and puns, for example, delineating two stripes of *pratiṣṭhā* (fame): piety *pratiṣṭhā* and notoriety *pratiṣṭhā*.[12]

Especially in speech, sometimes amid a flow of highblown terms, by way of contrast he would suddenly insert a zingy colloquialism or slang word to emphasize a grossness or absurdity.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī generally lectured in his first tongue, Bengali. He also often spoke and wrote in English. He spoke and read Oriya, but not very fluently, and did not lecture in it. In Bengali he would dictate articles for the *Paramārthī* to Śrīpāda Jati Śekhara Prabhu, who would immediately transpose them into Oriya.[†] In North India, he would converse and lecture in Hindi, and he personally proofread the first edition of the Gauḍīya Maṭha's Hindi magazine, the *Bhāgavata*. And especially when outside Bengal, he sometimes discussed in Sanskrit with *paṇḍitas.*

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's pronunciation of the name Kṛṣṇa was neither like the Bengali *kṛṣno* (the second syllable pronounced *o* as in the British pronunciation of *hot*), nor the Oriya *kruṣna,* but according to the standard Sanskrit: *kṛṣṇa*.

When visited by a professor of mathematics, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura discussed the position of that science in the East and West, and then in mathematical language relayed to him the nature of service to Godhead and its various stages.[*]

Although a brilliant wielder of several languages, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī did not speak merely to impress. His use of words was wholly transcendental, saturated with the spirit of service to Kṛṣṇa, and from an entirely different platform than that of materialists. Thus his diction was not of this world, but from beyond it. Once when he was discussing elaborate philosophical topics in English and seemed to be groping for suitable words, a gentleman present suggested that he speak in Bengali. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī responded, "I am conversing neither in English nor Bengali, nor any other language. Please hear attentively what I say." †

English

While bringing Bengali to new heights in a manner much appreciated by conservative scholars, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's preaching and publishing in English estranged the ironclad traditionalists, who spurned English and its attendant civilization as incompatible with the ancient dharma and culture of India and especially inappropriate for sadhus. Insisting that *śāstra* could not be expressed in foreign languages, such old-schoolers deemed it offensive to even attempt to render them in *mleccha-bhāṣā,* reasoning that persons not cultured enough to know Sanskrit were unfit to learn the truths encrypted in *śāstra*.[‡] But Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura countered, "If we think that the truth cannot be propagated in other languages, then our own understanding of the truth is limited and miserly, and we become divorced from and inimical to the truth."[13] With this conviction, he followed Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's lead in addressing the opportunity and need to preach and publish in English and in that language tackle issues relevant to contemporary life, thus underscoring both his (Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's) commitment to reach out to people whose conceptions were worlds apart from the traditional religious ethos of India, and his confidence in being able to bridge the divide. In so doing, he demonstrated masterly competence in the English language, yet he was impervious to its inbuilt cultural and ideational leanings. His English style was as formidable as his Bengali, as exemplified in the opening paragraph of the foreword to the Gauḍīya Maṭha's English edition of *Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā:*

> The materialistic demeanor cannot possibly stretch to the transcendental autocrat, who is ever inviting the fallen conditioned souls to associate with Him through devotion, or eternal serving mood. The phenomenal attractions are often found to tempt sentient beings to enjoy the variegated position, which is opposed to undifferenced monism. People are so much apt to indulge in transitory speculations even when they are to educate themselves on a situation beyond their empiric area or experiencing jurisdiction. The esoteric aspect often knocks them to trace out immanence in their outward inspection of transitory and transformable things. This impulse moves them to fix the position of the immanent to an indeterminate impersonal entity, no clue of which could be discerned by moving earth and heaven through their organic senses.

From his foreword to volume one of *Sree Krishna Chaitanya*:

> The transcendental sound has got a distinctive denomination from mundane sounds that often tend to submit to the test of other senses. As the transcendental sound has not been originated in mundane phenomena, He will not be diffident in showing His true phase whose manifestive realizations are identical with the name Himself. In that case the essence of such sound would not permit the different entities of the same object; as we find in phenomenal objects tracings of numerical base instead of the integral unit. The differential values are integrated in the transcendence. So there is indication of one object by the dinning of the ethereal vibrations in different positions. These sounds converge in one point who is known as the absolute. This absolute is on the eternal plane of all-

knowledge and incessant bliss and can have manifestive absolute phases with Him. If the various sounds are put into this chaotic plane, there is no reconciliation of a synthetic method. This unharmonizing tendency will surely bring a contending and unpleasant atmosphere that we experience every day.

The uneclipsed phase of the integral sound will not in any case bring rupture, but harmonize the contending phase due to the intervention of foreign intrusion. The demarcating lines of comprehending the same thing through the chambers of senses would lead to mundane enjoyment; whereas the ignorance of enjoying things through limited scope would put the enjoyer within the barriers. When the observer is one, He sees everything and exercises all His senses for His own gratification. But the servitors who are fractional entities cannot have any harmonious situation unless all of them have got one aim of being predominated over by the absolute. The question of relativity does not become a barrier, as we notice such deformities in these phenomena that are subject to individuality, space, and time. This situation, solving the difficulties of mundane relativity and absolute, has been finally settled by the transcendental unspotted manifestive phase, instead of wrongly inculcating a hallucinative theory of absolute by negativing the conception of diversities.

In "The Vedanta: Its Morphology and Ontology," Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī wrote:

Some of the adventurers have been found to transform the substratum itself or proselytize their mundane exploitive journey to the theory of misconception. The analytic process meets the synthetic aspirant at a point, and we find a combined attempt of their development in literatures which are also included later on in the Vedāntic school. *Dvaitādvaita* scholars of the Bhāskara and Nimbārka schools have given us such views. The empiric starting from a perishable plane aiming at the indestructible direction could bring for us a cumulative view of the terminus. The system of the Vedānta philosophy should always look forward to approach the Absolute and not to any non-absolute search. The mundane morphological march need not be considered identical with the transcendental morphology, which cannot in any case show its transiency and altering phases.

However, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī did not personally write much in English; most of the English writings attributed to him were actually compiled by Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu. Nearly all *Harmonist* articles credited to the editor were actually collated excerpts from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's speeches, translated in a high-flown manner meant to parallel *bhāgavatīya-bhāṣā*. Yet Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's Bengali was so deep, expressive, intricate, and subtle that it was nearly impossible to fully convey in English. And presenting Vaiṣṇava terms in alien English was an added challenge, regarding which the *Harmonist* proposed working toward a solution:

Another new feature is the column on Vaiṣṇava vocabulary which we hope to continue till we have succeeded in finding suitable terms for our terms in English or in hammering out

new words which will be comprehensible to all our readers. The language that is most common to the majority of people in India (and the world) is English. Therefore for the propagating of the Name it is necessary that we discover or coin words in that language to express our Vaiṣṇava phraseology. In this connection we solicit the help of our readers; we should be grateful if they would send us suggestions and join in the discussions that might result owing to conflicting views. We shall give in every issue a list of words with our suggested equivalents in English and earnestly invite the opinions, criticisms, and suggestions for better equivalents from our readers.[14]

Neologisms

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's perpetual flow of unprecedented philosophical insights necessitated his introducing sundry new locutions, word usages, and nonce words. This practice was accepted by Eastern and Western philosophers alike, who for presenting innovative ideas had determined the need to sometimes invent new terms or redefine old ones, often by using them in wholly original contexts. This was especially so for English, which having developed in a culture non-conducive to the nurture of Vedic philosophy, was poorly equipped to deal with transcendental philosophical conceptions.

A prime example is the word *philosophy* itself, which in standard English usage refers to theoretical lucubrations with no fixed basis. In the West, philosophy was so much divorced from religion that even metaphysics was but a backwater, thus rendering the Vedic philosophical matrix largely incongruent with the Western. In Vedic terms, philosophy constitutes understanding and describing the absolute truth in terms of knowledge received from *śāstra* through the system of guru-*paramparā.* The Sanskrit word normally considered the equivalent of *philosophy* is *darśana* (seeing), which Vaiṣṇavas recognize as an indispensible aid given by the Lord to His devotees for seeing Him. Thus, while constantly speaking philosophy and often employing the English word *philosophy,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī wanted to redefine its usage to tally with *darśana*— definitive insight based on knowledge received from *sādhu-śāstra-guru*—and stressed that without seeking out, finding, and applying such knowledge, human life was merely animalistic, and hypothetical attempts at philosophizing were simply intellectual titillation. He also assigned to many Bengali and Sanskrit words and terms his own specialized meaning—for instance, in denoting the absolute truth as *vāstavika-satya* (reality, or substantial truth).

Although to a mundaner these interpretations of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's might seem artificially convoluted, such transcendental lexicon is a function of a pure devotee's enlightened intellectual tendency to perceive Kṛṣṇa everywhere and in everything.[*] Certainly he did not arbitrarily, whimsically, or speculatively redefine terms. Rather, he was concerned with exact and unperverted usage, so that words could fulfil their ultimate function of defining and revealing reality. For instance, his "redefining" of *philosophy* actually restored its original connotation, "love of wisdom," from Greek via the Latin *philosophia*. He particularly pointed out recently coined misusages that indirectly conveyed defiance of or offense to Kṛṣṇa, such as Vivekananda's apparently pious coinage *daridra-nārāyaṇa,* which, by proposing to equalize the Supreme Lord with indigents, was actually highly offensive.[*] In common parlance *sāmpradāyika* denoted sectarianism, largely scorned in a world threatened by totalitarianism and in a Hindu ethos deeply influenced by Ramakrishna's mishmash religious harmonizing, yet Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura necessarily and unapologetically employed this term according to traditional usage of the word *sampradāya* (that by which there is complete bestowal), whence *sāmpradāyika* was derived.[†]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura often interspersed English with his spoken Bengali, as was fashionable

among "progressive" Bengalis as an indication of proficiency in the language of their rulers. Several English words and phrases were neologisticly employed in the argot used by him and his disciples:

commercial interest—Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would say that one who approaches a guru with "commercial interest" ipso facto deprives himself of the guru's actual gift: unmotivated love of Kṛṣṇa.

conditioned, bound—"programmed" or "subject to the conditions of material life." Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura generally translated the important term *baddha-jīva* as "conditioned soul," or sometimes literally: "bound soul."

dovetail—denotes the *jīva's* connecting his words, thoughts, activities, and aspirations in Kṛṣṇa's service.

living source—an authentic, fully realized devotee, an active repository of spiritual potency who does not just bookishly quote scripture, but bubbles with vital realization.

lucre-hunter—a person preoccupied with money.

mellow—employed as a noun to indicate the essential expression *rasa.* The meanings of the adjective *mellow* (soft, sweet, juicy, rich, full-flavored) suggest related although incomplete nuances.

order supplier—Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura derided the attitude of approaching the Supreme Lord as an "order supplier," which paralleled his oft-used example given in Bengali coinage of construing God as a provider of fuel for the fire of one's sensual desires. He further remonstrated, "Bhagavān is not our security guard, gardener, servant, accountant, or dealer for our necessities."[15]

proper adjustment—Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would say that religion means "proper adjustment," that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is simply proper adjustment of the relative with the absolute—neither renunciation nor exploitation of the environment is required, but dedication to the cause of the absolute truth.[16]

transparent, opaque—utilized to distinguish bona fide gurus from their imitators, and unadulterated knowledge from that muddied by contaminated thought processes. A "transparent" guru acts as an unrestricted conduit for the teachings of *śāstra* and the previous *ācāryas;* an "opaque" charlatan obstructs the brilliant light of *śāstrīya* conclusions, thus acting exactly contrarily to the duty of a genuine guru.

unalloyed—an important term to distinguish pure devotional service from mixed forms.

morphology, ontology—The special usages given by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī to the

words *morphology* and *ontology* are essential to the understanding of his mission. By *morphology* he referred to the outward appearance or form of a phenomenon, in contrast to its "ontology," or inner essence. Although *morphology* refers to the branch of biology concerned with the form and structure of organisms, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī used the word in a sense derived from its Greek roots *morpho* (shape) and *logy* (the science or study of). These combine to mean "the study or science of form," in Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's parlance indicating the physical manifestation of the Gauḍīya Maṭha—buildings, projects, exhibitions, and the like, and even the awarding of *sannyāsa* and donning of red cloth—intended to attract people to the ontological necessity of approaching Kṛṣṇa according to the path elucidated by *śāstra* and the *ācāryas*. Morphological aspects may be adjusted to appeal to the public, or wholly discarded, whereas ontology is inviolable. Morphology is meant only to lead to ontology, and although having no intrinsic value, was nonetheless to be utilized in the spirit of *yukta-vairāgya*. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī gave the example that an elaborately embellished purse serves no function if there is no money in it, thus admonishing his disciples not to convert the Gauḍīya Maṭha into just another tinsel religious institution focused on assets, finances, and followers, but to remember that hype without substance is useless. This conception of morphology and ontology applies not only to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's mission, but to his very personality also, for his outward show of opulence and grandeur, combined with tongue and pen both like the ax of Paraśurāma, belied the inner sweetness and simplicity of his Vraja-*bhakti*. He also used *morphology* and *ontology* to denote exoteric and esoteric religious practices, ascribing to *morphology* the meaning "observing prescribed procedures," and to *ontology* "personal internal development," the expected result thereof. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī further explained that on the transcendental plane (*advaya-jñāna*) morphology and ontology are identical.[*]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura revealed that *Vaiṣṇava* is a generic term meaning "devotee of Viṣṇu," *Kārṣṇa* refers to either a devotee or family member of Kṛṣṇa, and that although the *ajña-rūḍhi* (conventional definition) of *Gauḍīya* is "of or pertaining to Gauḍa-*deśa,*" the *vidvad-rūḍhi* (esoteric meaning) is "a devotee of Rādhārāṇī," and to please Her one should be devoted to Kṛṣṇa.

He often explained words in a novel manner, to indicate Kṛṣṇa, thus following the doctrine of *viṣṇu-sarvanāmatva* introduced by Śrīla Madhvācārya and accepted by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu—that all terms, even those apparently devoid of spiritual meaning, are names of Viṣṇu or are in relation to Him, denoting His energies or the process of *bhakti*.[†]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura described Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa as the predominated and predominating "moieties" of the absolute whole and further elaborated that Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī was not the counterpart, but the "counterwhole," of Kṛṣṇa. And he redefined the saying "Time is money," averring that time is more valuable than money—time spent in serving Kṛṣṇa brings the wages of eternal life, whereas money and attachment to it are causes of further incarceration in the madhouse of the material world.[17]

The inaugural issue of the *Harmonist* corrected the Latin aphorism *vox dei vox populi:* "The voice of the people is the voice of God."

> It is necessary at the outset to caution the reader against the theory of *vox dei vox populi.* The *Harmonist* has nothing to do with *vox populi.* Her only concern is with *vox dei.* It is the voice of God alone that will find utterance in these pages.[18]

Elsewhere:

> *Vox populi* is not *vox dei,* but *vox dei* should be *vox populi.* Popular opinion is not the same as God's opinion; rather, pious people should adopt His opinion. This is what the *mahājanas* instruct. *Cij-jaḍa-samanvaya-vādīs* (those who propose mixing spirit with matter) say just the opposite—*yata mata tata patha:* "As many opinions, as many ways." The popular voice should be the opinion of the Supreme Lord and the path of attaining Him. Yet how amazing it is that where popular opinion is dharma, love of the Supreme Lord is banished, and where public support is the testing stone for ascertaining the Absolute Truth, non-duplicitous truth disappears![19]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī stated that the truth is intrinsically superior to *vox populi,* for even though not known to all, and even if spoken by only one individual, truth is still truth; it is not a commodity subject to the opinion of the masses. Nor does a falsity become true merely because many are convinced so.

To avoid simplistic Christian connotations, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura preferred the term *Personality of Godhead* to *God*. He pointed out the Christian ideation of God as the creator of a world meant for the enjoyment of its inhabitants, and considered Christianity merely hazy gratitude toward a vaguely defined cosmic order supplier. In Christian mysticism *Godhead* was generally taken to denote an ineffable divinity or hypostasis of God, similar to the impersonal absolute ideated by Indian Māyāvādīs, whereas Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura insisted that true comprehension of Godhead can only mean accepting Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality:

> The word *God* or *Theos* invokes a very limited concept. We find the highest and perfect conception of theism in Kṛṣṇa only. The word *Allah* means the greatest, i.e., the possessor of a partial quality. It is an adjective. But Kṛṣṇa is the source of all powers. He is the proper noun. The inculcators of Viṣṇu as the Absolute Truth are perfectly sanguine of their full conception.[20]

In an age wherein totalitarianism was widespread yet much despised and feared, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura proudly declared Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the supreme or transcendental despot and spiritual autocrat. He would quote the legalism "All rights reserved," explaining that Kṛṣṇa is the unchallengeable overlord and absolute enjoyer, and that no one can independently claim any rights or privileges without His sanction, for everything depends on His sweet will, and He is not answerable to anyone. And Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would refer to Lord Caitanya as "Godhead par excellence."[21]

In his lecture at the opening of the Ekāyana Maṭha in Krishnanagar, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī gave an original explanation of the word *ekāyana* (the only way or manner of conduct; absolute devotedness to one object): as the single path of exclusive devotion to Kṛṣṇa, *ekāyana* is the trunk of the Vedic tree, and all other paths, *bahva-ayana* (a word coined by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī), are its branches.[*]

Linguistic Warfare

Recognizing that concepts, worldviews, and each individual's entire manner of thinking are formed through the medium of language, and that philosophical outlook and ensuing behavior and attitude is thus embedded in language, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was seized of the necessity to clearly and accurately define words, for a word incorrectly construed is inevitably misused, and when so applied to *śāstrīya* diction it undoes the whole purpose of *śāstra.* He described that every word can be understood in three ways: *Ajña-rūḍhi,* the *rūḍhi* (meaning) of a word accepted by the *ajña* (unenlightened, less intelligent), indicates for them an object or conception conducive for worldly sense enjoyment. *Vidvad-rūḍhi,* the internal meaning accepted by the *vidvat* (learned and enlightened) indicates the Supreme Lord or an *uddīpana.* The third is *sādhāraṇa-rūḍhi.*[†] This analysis was founded on that which Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī derived from ancient grammar treatises and gave in his *Sarva-saṁvādinī* (*Anuccheda* 10): *dhvany-ātmika-śabda* is a term grasped within the mind of a pure soul and understood in its original sense, whereas *varṇātmikaśabda* is a pronounced word whose meaning is covered or influenced by a literal or imposed definition.[*] The early Gauḍīya writer Śrī Kavi-karṇapūra had also outlined such usages in his *Alaṅkāra-kaustubha,* by drawing from *alaṅkāra-śāstra,* which discusses different applications of words.

For centuries such linguistic, epistemological, and hermeneutical analysis had been central to Vedic philosophizing, and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī also used these terms extensively to floor all schools of nondevotional Sanskrit scholarship, maintaining that the aspect of words that indicate anything but Viṣṇu and service to Him conveys a meaning proceeding from ignorance, for every word written or uttered in knowledge indicates and signifies in all respects Viṣṇu.

Discerning rife manipulation of words for obfuscating and recasting their meanings, during 1920 Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī visited Maharaja Maṇīndra-candra Nandī in Kashimbazar specifically to impress upon him the importance of the *Vaiṣṇava-mañjuṣā,* compilation of which the maharaja had agreed to sponsor.[†] Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī forcefully explained to him that for lack of a comprehensive lexicon giving the *vidvad-rūḍhi* of terminology found in Vaiṣṇava literature, a range of misunderstandings was being created by persons of malicious intent. He cited *mukta-pragraha-nyāya:* "If a horse is not restrained it will careen at will."[‡] Similarly, if not retarded by mundane desires, words naturally gravitate toward their highest meaning in relation to the absolute truth. By malinterpretation of terms crucial for apprehending Vaiṣṇava philosophy—such as *sevā, līlā, aprākṛta, paropakāra, parārthitā, nīti, dharma, mukti, prema, sādhana, yoga, bhakti, vidyā, satya, samanvaya, udāratā, dainya, sukha, duḥkha, aspṛśyatā, harijana,* and *prakaṭa-aprakaṭa*—their original denotation was becoming perverted.[§] Thus, ordinary work for sense gratification was called *sevā,* the suffering of the *jīva* was considered *līlā,* and similarly by semantic manipulation everything material was theoretically converted into spiritual and vice-versa. Commonsense differentiation between these two opposite states thereby becoming dissolved, society was now plunged in an irreligious quagmire in which such ridiculous and contradictory slogans as Swami

Vivekananda's "Work is worship" could flourish. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī declared that if in his lifetime he did not complete the task of assembling *Vaiṣṇava-mañjuṣā,* then specifically for that purpose he would again take birth.[*]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura repeatedly touched on the theme of semiotics and misrepresented words. In one lecture he elaborated how the very name Kṛṣṇa was generally misconstrued according to various preconceived gossamer ideas or vaporous doctrinal formulas, but that Kṛṣṇa is factual and indeed the basis of all facticity:

> The Kṛṣṇa of genuine Kṛṣṇa-*kīrtana* is not the imagined Kṛṣṇa attempted to be imprisoned by the hybrid ideologies of feeble mankind, the "Kṛṣṇa" conceived as a historical figure, or an allegorical or mythological "Kṛṣṇa"; nor the "Kṛṣṇa" of the *prākṛta-sahajiyās* or materially lusty persons; nor the "Kṛṣṇa" portrayed by mundane artists or of those in the grip of liberal doctrines; nor the "Kṛṣṇa" of the clay-brained; nor the "Kṛṣṇa" taken as fuel supply for any personal inclination. Such *māyā*-mixed "Kṛṣṇas" are not the Kṛṣṇa of Kṛṣṇa-*saṅkīrtana.* When a famous novelist described *Kṛṣṇa-caritra* (The life story of Kṛṣṇa), how gushily the New Bengal youth proclaimed it at every street corner and marketplace![†] When *Kṛṣṇa-caritra* was first published, from every mouth, both young and old, was heard, "Now there is fresh light on the character of Kṛṣṇa!" There was so much discussion on the "Kṛṣṇa of *Mahābhārata*" and the "Kṛṣṇa of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,*" and so on. But our Kṛṣṇa is not a "Kṛṣṇa" to be measured by clay-brains and placed in a box. Our Kṛṣṇa is Śrī Kṛṣṇa. *Kṛṣṇa* means all-attractive, and *Śrī* means the supremely beautiful, who only Kṛṣṇa has the power to attract.[*]
>
> If we worship Kṛṣṇa with preponderant fear, hesitation, or reverence, or for satisfaction of worldly desires, we will get an avatar of Kṛṣṇa, not the original Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is described in *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.1):
>
> *īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ*
> *anādir ādir govindaḥ sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam*
>
> Kṛṣṇa, known as Govinda, is the Supreme Godhead. He has an eternal blissful spiritual body. He is the origin of all. He has no other origin, and He is the prime cause of all causes.
>
> When we search out the cause of all causes, when our need is for the source of all beauty, then only will Kṛṣṇa appear to fulfil that need.[22]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura noted that *bhakti* must rest on *bhakti-siddhānta,* which begins with unambiguously distinguishing spiritual from material. Use of words such as *bhakti* and *prema* by those who consider themselves devotees but are not trained in *bhakti-siddhānta* must be misconstrued, and reflects the mundane sentiments and desires that typify such persons' whole approach to *bhakti.* He specified that the very term *bhakti* can be appropriately used only in relation to Kṛṣṇa: "At present many false meanings have been superimposed upon the word

bhakti. Regard for one's parents, loyalty to man, obedience to the teacher, and so forth, pass as *bhakti.* Yet the root *bhaj* means 'to serve.' If we do not clearly judge what must be the medium of that service, then surely it will be misapplied."[23]

Śuddha-bhakti (pure devotional service) was a key term employed by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. In accordance with Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's defining it as *anyābhilāṣitā-śūnya,* it distinguished the object of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's preaching from *karma-miśra-bhakti, jñāna-miśra-bhakti, yoga-miśra-bhakti,* and *apa-sampradāyas'* misconceptions operating under the name of *bhakti,* and in the highest realm indicated Vraja-*bhakti* as distinguished from that focused on other regions of the spiritual world, namely Vaikuṇṭha, Ayodhyā, Mathurā, and Dvārakā.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī never used the word *vāda* (theory) in connection with the absolute truth—for instance, never saying *bhakti-vāda*, but always *bhakti-siddhānta.* When in his presence Sundarānanda Prabhu once spoke of *acintya-bhedābheda-vāda,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī corrected him: "It is better to say *acintya-bhedābheda-siddhānta,* for this is the eternally established, perfect, undefeatable, true, and ascertained exposition of Vedānta." The *Harmonist* distinguished the term *avatar* from its common misnomer, *incarnation:*

> The abnormal term *incarnation,* i.e., "incarceration in the flesh" of the Divinity Himself, has been invented by so-called theologians to denote the "miracle" of the nativity of Christ.... The sonhood of Godhead is unreservedly admitted, in the eternal transcendental sense, by the doctrine of divine descent (avatar) which is quite wrongly rendered *incarnation* inasmuch as in the process of descent there is no reference to any assumption of the mortal coil by the Divinity for rendering any "service" to humanity by undergoing any mortal suffering himself. The doctrine of divine descent implies, on the contrary, that Godhead can never be subject to any limitation in the mundane sense.[24]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī opposed employing the word *jayantī* for birthdays of eminent national figures, for according to several *śāstrīya* references given in chapter fifteen of *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, jayantī* indicates the specific time when the star Rohiṇī is conjoined with the moon on the *kṛṣṇa-pakṣa aṣṭamī* of the month of Bhādra, and thus exclusively refers to the *āvirbhāva-tithi* of Kṛṣṇa.[*] However, Gaura being nondifferent from the original Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī also approved and employed the term Gaura-*jayantī* for the *āvirbhāva-tithi* of Gaura.

When one gentleman spoke of "*āmāra* (my) Gaura," Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura objected that this was redolent of *sahajiyā-vāda,* because for anyone who still identifies with the material world in terms of "I" and "mine" to claim Gaura as "his" was both an overstepping of eligibility and an attempt to classify Gaura as a mundane object for personal enjoyment.

Fifteen

Establishing Temples

Since the era succeeding Śrī Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, most Gauḍīyas had worshiped deities principally as part of their own *bhajana* rather than for uplifting the general populace. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was the first Gauḍīya *ācārya* of this era to establish large public temples with opulent deity service. A major purpose in so doing was to attract the general populace to associate with and hear from genuine sadhus.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was the *ācārya* who effectively combined the *pañcarātra* and *bhāgavata* spiritual paths. Although the goal of each is the same, *pañcarātra* entails constructing temples and performing elaborate deity worship, whereas the *bhāgavata* path emphasizes constant worship by remembering, chanting, and hearing of the names, forms, qualities, associates, and pastimes of Bhagavān. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's intention in erecting temples was not to provide facilities for *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs* to worship deities and remain in neophyte consciousness, but to bestow the utmost benefit on devotees inclined toward *arcana,* by establishing centers for congregational hearing and chanting about and serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Although temple construction necessitated the collection and disbursal of much wealth, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura stressed that wherever there was no *kīrtana* there was no genuine wealth. He clarified that the goal of *pañcarātra* is loyalty and service to the deity form of the Lord, yet deity worship being subservient to *kīrtana,* the primary worship in each Gauḍīya Maṭha was of Bhagavān in His form as the holy name, and that the value of establishing Maṭhas was particularly in their facilitating *kīrtana-yajña,* the sacrifice of chanting the holy name and broadcasting *bhāgavata-dharma.*

Most of the Maṭhas founded by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura were preaching bases in cities, although he also established centers in less-frequented but spiritually significant locations in both Navadvīpa-*maṇḍala* and Vraja-*maṇḍala,* and at various sites therein revived ancient worship that had been discontinued. He opened Maṭhas in other holy places as well, such as Kurukṣetra and Naimiṣāraṇya, and in villages where there were offers of land and the local folk were enthusiastic. That at Naimiṣāraṇya was meant to publicize the importance of Naimiṣāraṇya as the site of Śrīla Sūta Gosvāmī's historical recitation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* and for extensive propagation of Lord Caitanya's message throughout the vast Hindi-speaking area of North India, particularly by publishing the *Bhāgavata* magazine therefrom.

The Maṭhas at Caṭaka Parvata and Suvarṇa Vihāra were built on land previously considered useless or uninhabitable. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī said that since those plots were intended for Kṛṣṇa's service, they were being protected by *yoga-māyā* until the right person came to reveal that service.

Apart from building new temples, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura initiated restoration and reparation of

several old Viṣṇu temples in sacred locations—for instance, the addition of a boundary wall and lion gate to the ancient temple in Ālālanātha.* And when some of his men complained that the laborers were smoking bidis on site, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura went there to personally roll bidis for them. "If this is what they need to get the work done," he said, "let them have it."[1]

Traditionally whenever a temple was established, accompanying land or other patrimony was secured to assure the deities' future maintenance. Such arrangements were also made in some (not all) Gauḍīya Maṭhas. Commenting on this, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī stated:

> Many people tell me to make a permanent arrangement for our Maṭhas, but I shall not. If there is actual inclination to serve the Lord, and tangible surrender, then by the Lord's mercy His service will continue well and Mahāprabhu's teachings will be propagated boldly. If not, let everything go to hell.[2]

Aware that in the future the Maṭhas he had founded might be occupied chiefly for selfish motivations, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura spoke of the preferability of building small earth huts for *bhajana*. He said, "Those attached to Hari-*bhajana* will be able to live in a house suitable for *bhajana,* which does not require maintenance. Not erecting permanent structures foils the desires of sinecurists who in the future will become opposed to Hari-*bhajana* and wish to use such places for sensual gratification." Hence, in some Maṭhas he deliberately had devotees' residential quarters made rickety and liable to soon crumble, to leave some work for future generations and to discourage *maṭha-vāsīs* from developing an attitude of snug proprietorship toward the buildings. He often said, "I have not come to this world as a mason or contractor, but as a peon of Śrī Caitanya-deva's *vāṇī.*"[3]

He distinguished between establishing temples for personal aggrandizement and doing so out of pure desire to please the Lord: "Building temples for gaining material recognition is *karma-kāṇḍa*. A temple must be established by mantra and suitable consciousness. Only after repeated births might the person who works for fleeting fame develop a tendency for *śuddha-bhakti.*"

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī once described how Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had enthusiastically supervised the construction of Bhakti Bhavan while holding his *japa* beads in hand, about which some outsiders used to natter, "Better if Bhaktivinoda were posted in the public works department instead of the justice department." But Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had expressed that when overseeing erection of a place for devotees to perform *bhajana,* his own desire for *bhajana* grew and his heart became gladdened at the prospect of serving devotees. He declared that as he saw the masons' work progressing, his proclivity for Kṛṣṇa-*sevā* increased. Moreover: "Though ordinary people consider bricks, lime, and cement material objects for personal utilization, when these items are engaged in Kṛṣṇa's service a devotee sees them as *uddīpanas* for Kṛṣṇa-*sevā*.* Hence bricks, lime, and cement cannot obstruct such a devotee's vision of Viṣṇu and Vaiṣṇavas. On the contrary, they are *uddīpanas* for further remembrance of Viṣṇu." [4]

During Vraja-maṇḍala Parikramā, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura pointed out an open space near

Vṛndāvana railway station and commented that if a Maṭha were established on that site, preaching would automatically develop from it. And when at Gokula, he instructed that a Maṭha be established on the main road (then just a village track) but at a distance from other temples. “Don't enter the stomach of the *pāṇḍās,*” he warned.[†]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura liked that scriptural verses be painted or inscribed in marble on both the inside and outside of temple walls. At the Śrī Vāsudeva Rāmānuja Maṭha in Purī he had verses inscribed on the walls.[‡]

Sixteen

Deity Worship

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's introduction of elaborate and gorgeous deity worship was yet another move wholly concordant with the need of the bound *jīvas,* but quite discordant with the spirit of that revisionary anti-superstitious age wherein deity worship was widely considered idolatrous and aboriginal both by Christian detractors and Hindus such as Ārya Samājīs, who under European influence sought to establish Hinduism on what they deemed a more rational basis.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī revealed service to deities in twenty-seven Gauḍīya Maṭhas, according to the rites prescribed in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*.[*] In the majority he installed deities of Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga–Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī (Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa accompanied by Gaurāṅga), with the recent *ācāryas* Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī present in the form of pictures, arranged right to left in accord with the tradition that a junior should be to the left of a senior. A *Gauḍīya* article described that the dancing form of Lord Caitanya is worshiped according to *pañcarātra,* and the deity of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa as per *bhāgavata-mārga.* Referring to "Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga" indicated that Gaurāṅga was ever to be worshiped along with and through the medium of His confidential associates, among whom *śrī-gurudeva* was the direct manifestation. Most Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa deities were named according to the genre "Guru-Gaurāṅga–Vinoda-Pramoda Jīu," "Guru-Gaurāṅga–Vinoda-Prāṇa Jīu," and so on.[†] "Vinoda" refers to Rādhā and indicates how Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī saw Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura as the plenipotentiary of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī—although some fools misunderstood Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's thus naming deities as a sign of mundane filial attachment. He gave traditional names like Rādhā-Govinda and Rādhā-Gopīnātha to some Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa deities that he installed, while others were known only as Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī, a generic term by which he and his disciples generally referred to all Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa deities.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura also installed other deities at various Gauḍīya Maṭha branches—Śrī Pañca-tattva and Śrī Jagannātha at the Yogapīṭha, there also reinstituting the ancient worship of Adhokṣaja Viṣṇu; Śrī Nṛsiṁha-deva at Śrīvāsa Aṅgana; Śrī Advaita Prabhu worshiping Mahāprabhu, at Advaita Bhavan; Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nityānanda in Modadrumadvīpa; Śrī Ālvārnātha (a small replica of the deity in the closeby ancient temple of Ālvārnātha) at Ālālanātha; Śrī Vyāsadeva and Śrī Madhvācārya in Purī; Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in Godrumadvīpa; and Śrī Jagannātha in Mymensingh. In addition, he installed Śrī Śrī Gaura-Gadādhara in Purī and at Suvarṇa Vihāra Maṭha in Navadvīpa-*maṇḍala,* and revived Their almost discontinued service at Cāṅpāhāṭi. He explained that Śrī Śrī Gaura-Gadādhara are the focus of worship for devotees of Lord Caitanya in the shelter of *madhura-rasa,* as are Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi for those in the shelter of *sakhya-* and *vātsalya-rasas*.[1]

Initially, deities installed in Gauḍīya Maṭhas were modeled from clay and straw, after the style of demigod icons commonly worshiped during annual festivals and subsequently consigned to

rivers. Yet Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura envisioned establishing permanent forms in many proposed Maṭhas. Thus while the new temple of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha was under construction he requisitioned from Jaypur more than sixty pairs of marble Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa deities, whose worship was gradually established in different locations. He wanted that the new form of Vinoda-Prāṇa Jīu be just like that of the original clay deity being worshiped at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, and on arriving in Jaypur he found in a shop an exact resemblance, which however was already sold to a Marwari merchant. But following an order received in a dream, that man ceded the deities to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Among the pairs of forms sent by truck from Jaypur, those damaged in transport were on Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's order consigned to Rādhā-kuṇḍa at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha.[*] The Gaurāṅga deities that accompanied these marble-fashioned Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa forms were sculpted in Bengal from local neem wood.

Deity installations were arranged and conducted by three prominent disciples—Śrīpāda Śrauti Mahārāja, Śrīpāda Vaikhānasa Mahārāja, and Śrīpāda Praṇavānanda Brahmacārī—all from *brāhmaṇa* families and expert in rituals and ceremonies. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura did not install deities according to the traditional elaborate system of *prāṇa-pratiṣṭhā* (installing the life force), but rather with simplified procedures and much *harināma-kīrtana,* culminating with he himself —as the *ācārya,* whose role was to invite Kṛṣṇa to accept worship—placing *tulasī* leaves at Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. He averred:

> Deities should be worshiped only after being installed. Only an *ācārya* in direct touch with Godhead can install the deity. From his heart he will install the Supreme Lord, just as from Vasudeva's heart Kṛṣṇa appeared. Anyone can go to the market and buy a deity. We may respect that form, but that is not a properly installed deity. Self-manifested deities (*svayambhū*) who have descended into this world, such as Keśava and Nārāyaṇa, and the deities installed by *ācāryas,* are called *śrī-vigraha.*[2]

At a deity installation in Sarabhog, Assam, Śrīmat Śrīdhara Mahārāja not only assisted in making arrangements for the event, but when dressing the deities placed *tulasī* leaves on Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, considering that without doing so, decoration was incomplete. When Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura saw this, he remarked that there was nothing left for him to do, for now the deities were practically installed. Although Śrīdhara Mahārāja had not perceived any hint of anger in Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's words, he felt that he had dissatisfied his *gurudeva,* so immediately fell at his master's feet begging forgiveness. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura raised him up, saying that for a *śaraṇāgata* (surrendered) devotee there is no possibility of committing offenses.

Although in *arcana,* worship of the guru must precede that of the Supreme Lord, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī did not want that pictures of himself be worshiped, at least not during his manifest presence. To a *gṛhastha* disciple who had written asking for permission to do so, he replied:

> It is better that my picture not be kept in devotees' homes. We should always remember that the desire for honor and prestige is like pig stool. After my passing away, these may

be required. If worship of such symbols is begun in my living presence, it will be my downfall.*

Arcana procedures given by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura for the Gauḍīya Maṭha were based largely on the extensive directions given in Śrī Bipina Bihārī Goswami's *Hari-bhakti-taraṅgiṇī,* and also incorporated those of *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* and the *Saṅkṣepa-arcana-paddhati* (Abridged system of worship) given by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura at the end of his *Bhajana-rahasya.**

In his own preface to *Bhajana-rahasya,* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura emphasized the superiority of *bhajana* over *arcana:*

> While revealing the secrets of *bhajana,* this book narrates that in *arcana* a connection with the gross and subtle bodies basically remains. In the realm of *bhajana,* the embodied soul freed from gross and subtle designations directly serves the Supreme Personality. One who sincerely performs *bhajana* and is completely free from all worldly designations perceives through his spiritual senses something beyond the material sphere. The realization that he achieves leads him to the proximity of the *advaya-jñāna-tattva,* where he serves on a level above the mundane senses and time.

Elsewhere he wrote:

> *Arcana* is relevant to the stage of *sādhana-bhakti,* from which one serves the Lord to carry out the regulations of the process. One who has achieved the shelter of the Lord's holy name and is seriously trying to serve the Lord should be considered on the platform of *bhajana,* even though his external activities may sometimes be less disciplined than those of the neophyte engaged in *arcana.* Yet this apparent lack of strictness refers not to laxity in the basic principles of sane behavior or in renunciation of sense gratification, but rather to details of Vaiṣṇava ceremonies.[3]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura always stressed the primacy of *kīrtana* over *arcana,* citing Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's teaching that in Kali-yuga the other limbs of *bhakti* should be accompanied by *kīrtana.*[4] He elaborated, "Without *saṅkīrtana* one cannot serve the form of the Lord who combines Rādhā and Govinda in His body (i.e., Lord Caitanya). One cannot serve Śrī Rādhā-Govinda merely by temple worship. Being the very essence of *arcana, saṅkīrtana* is mandatory."[5]* He wanted that *kīrtana* accompany every *ārati,* during which, devotees should meditate on the deity's pastimes being described in the song. For instance, the verse *jaya jaya gorācāndera āratiko śobhā/ jāhnavī-taṭa-vane jaga-mana-lobhā* stimulates remembrance of Lord Caitanya's *ārati* being conducted on the bank of the Jāhnavī, attracting the mind of everyone in the universe.†

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī instructed his disciples to perform *arcana* in a simple, abbreviated manner as an aid to *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana,* the principal items of *bhajana,* asserting that pretensions of deity worship sans hearing of Hari-*kathā* is merely idol worship.[6] Yet he did not consider *arcana* inconsequential or irrelevant. He wanted that it be conducted tastefully and

with care and stated, "Deity worship is not child's play. One who considers the deity an object of his own enjoyment substitutes *d-o-g* for *G-o-d;* his worship is as if of dogs."[7]

He also distinguished between the *arcana* of pure devotees and the idol worship of nondevotees, the former being loving worship of the Supreme Lord by recognizing His form as *saccidānanda* and the latter being time-serving flattery, deeming the deity merely a means for procuring material boons, with no actual regard for the deity, and supposing that all gods ultimately arise from an impersonal absolute:

> We show artificial devotion while worshiping demigods. A devotee is eager to serve Bhagavān, whereas a nondevotee is eager to pickpocket Him. On the pretext of worship, nondevotees present many demands. That is why in *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa states that even though such people worship Him, they do so without proper understanding. Kṛṣṇa is very clever, and His devotees are even more clever because they do not want anything other than His service.[8]

A man who had grandiosely propitiated the demigod Kārtikeya for a son, actually begot one, but when a year later the infant died, that man smashed his deity of Kārtikeya. Hearing of this Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura commented, "It is just like Satya-Nārāyaṇa–*pūjā.* You accept Satya-Nārāyaṇa if He gives you something, but if you don't get anything, you call Him Mithyā-Nārāyaṇa. Don't make Bhagavān your order supplier. Become His servant."[*] Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura averred that although worship of Viṣṇu as Satya-Nārāyaṇa is prescribed in the *Purāṇas* for procuring material boons, the Supreme Absolute Truth, Nārāyaṇa, could not be truly worshiped for gaining that which is ephemeral and thus false; hence such shows of worship are actually false.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura wanted that plenty of flowers be offered to the temple deities. Most of his Maṭhas had gardens in which fragrant flowers dear to Kṛṣṇa, such as *belī, campaka,* and *cāmelī,* were grown along with *tulasī.* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was especially fond of *belī,* a springtime blossom, and wanted them offered daily to the deities while in season. When at Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha he once saw that there were no flowers on the altar, he asked the *pūjārī* why not. Upon being told that none were in season he chided, "How can you perform *arcana* without flowers? Somehow or other you should get some."

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī cautioned visitors not to take flowers from Maṭha gardens for doing *pūjā* in their homes, saying, "We have grown these flowers for offering to Kṛṣṇa. If you want to present something to Kṛṣṇa you should make your own arrangements, not simply take advantage of our endeavors. Worship with your own earnings; that is the proper way to serve Kṛṣṇa. The duty of devotees is to protect the property of the Maṭha, not exploit it. If you want to take flowers and other items for *pūjā,* do so from householders' homes, not here."

At Saccidānanda Maṭha, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was taking *darśana* of the deities from some distance when he pointed out, "There is an ant in the flower on Kṛṣṇa. Remove it."

One night a *pūjārī* at Saccidānanda Maṭha forgot to put up the deities' mosquito nets. Normally Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura never checked to see if this had been done, nor on this occasion had anyone informed him of the oversight, yet the next morning before *maṅgala-ārati* he asked the *pūjārī* if he had forgotten to set the deities' mosquito net. When the *pūjārī* admitted his fault Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura said, "Kṛṣṇa did not sleep last night. You have erred. You fixed the net for yourself but not for Kṛṣṇa. Why?" And in the scheduled lecture that morning, he stressed the seriousness of service to the deity form of the Lord.

On a visit to Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, the scholar and politician Śrī Madana-mohana Mālavīya inquired why the deity of Caitanya Mahāprabhu had His hands raised, for previously he had never seen any deity in that pose. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī explained that this was Mahāprabhu in His role as preacher of the holy names.

In his youth, Śrīpāda Satprasaṅgānanda Brahmacārī became *pūjārī* at the Cāṅpāhāṭi Maṭha (a service that he faithfully maintained until late in his long life). When he once asked for permission to go to Purī, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura acquiesced but added, "I have entrusted you to look after the deities. If you go now, who will look after Them? Will They be neglected?"

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī attributed problematic events in any *maṭha* to offenses in deity worship. Whenever there were occurrences such as theft or severe illness of himself or other *maṭha-vāsīs,* he especially warned his disciples not to incur offenses against the deity. On the last day of the Theistic Exhibition at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha in 1930, powerful winds tore apart the structures housing the displays, hurling tin sheets into the air, one of which damaged the dome over the deity of Śrī Rāmānuja adjoining the main temple. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī pointed out that because Śrī Rāmānuja is the *ācārya* of deity worship, this untoward incident indicated some defect in the service to the deities. Upon investigation, a *pūjārī* admitted to having written a love letter in the deity room. He was immediately replaced, and the dome repaired; and a policy was instituted that, as far as possible, *arcana* there be performed by pre-puberal boys.

Hari-bhakti-vilāsa states that if deities become broken, burned, or in other ways apparently defiled they should be committed to the sea or another deep body of water, according to the rite known as *visarjana,* and another form installed. Yet Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī deemed this injunction suitable only for neophyte devotees who, being afflicted with the *smārta* misunderstanding of the deity as a statue representing an ultimately impersonal God, lacked appreciation of such transcendental forms' identity as the Supreme Lord Himself.* He railed in anger upon being informed that the *jāta-gosāñi* Śrī Atula Kṛṣṇa Goswami had thus recommended disposing of the deities at Kheturi who had been installed and worshiped by Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura in the presence of dozens of famed associates of Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda. He compared such disposal of a deity to a bad son's abandoning his elderly and infirm parents, or an unchaste woman taking a lover when her aged husband is no longer capable of giving her enjoyment.

In his childhood Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had worshiped the Kūrma *śilā* entrusted to him

by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura; and in later life he performed simple worship of a Govardhana-*śilā* within his room at Bhakti Vijaya Bhavan, offering *tulasī* leaves and water as well as prepared foods, the remnants of which he thereafter honored as a meal. But he did not directly perform any aspect of *arcana* of deities that he had installed.

Seventeen

Festivals

Drawing on the already established *mahotsava* tradition in Gauḍīya culture, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura introduced glorious festivals as a primary feature of the Gauḍīya Maṭha propaganda campaign. These festivals gave a taste of the spiritual world to their numerous participants and hence did much to popularize the Gauḍīya Maṭha and legitimize it in the public eye, for although few felt comfortable with its barrage of diatribes against distorted religion, even fewer could refuse the attraction of its joyous celebrations and sumptuous *mahā-prasāda.* Especially at the Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Calcutta, sometimes tens of thousands were fed in a single day. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura wanted that each major Vaiṣṇava festival be grandly observed in every branch of the Gauḍīya Maṭha archipelago, and by further introducing some extra celebrations and special events, he created a constant gala mood whereby Maṭha inmates and local *gṛhastha* disciples were busy either conducting a festival or preparing for the next.

Although most festivals consisted simply of *kīrtana, darśana, parāyaṇa,* Hari-*kathā* (and on certain days, distribution of *mahā-prasāda*), being widely publicized they attracted huge crowds.[*] Wherever they were held, Gauḍīya Maṭha festivals became an important part of the local social life. The magic of mass *harināma* and *mahā-prasāda* distribution dissolved much mistrust, and consequently many people who previously had doubted the Gauḍīya Maṭha went away praising it with newfound appreciation. Caste and other societal barriers were vanquished as all participants became absorbed in the Vaikuṇṭha atmosphere. These celebrations became so popular and reputed that even some avowed foes of the Gauḍīya Maṭha could not resist attending them—upon which they would be respectfully greeted and well cared for, and departing which, they generally could not but admit that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his men were perhaps not so bad after all.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura explained the rationale behind Gauḍīya Maṭha festivals:

> We conduct festivals in the Maṭha to give all people an opportunity to associate with devotees, destroy their attachment for household life, display compassion for all living entities, develop a taste for chanting the holy name, and serve Hari-guru-Vaiṣṇavas. The main purpose for the Maṭha's holding festivals, reciting *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* and discussing Hari-*kathā* is to wake the soul's constitutional propensity [to serve Kṛṣṇa].[1]
>
> Gauḍīya Maṭha festivals and celebrations are meant to effect good fortune toward persons busy in activities other than Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti,* who are attracted to pomp and grandeur, by giving them the chance to hear discussion of truth.[2]

Unless required to perform essential services in various Maṭhas, all initiated devotees throughout the country were expected to come for the approximately two-week celebration centered in Māyāpur, the largest yearly gathering of the Gauḍīya Maṭha. Beginning with

Navadvīpa-dhāma Parikramā, it continued with a combined convocation of the Navadvīpa-dhāma-pracāriṇī Sabhā and the Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā, and concluded with observance of Gaura-*jayantī.*

Apart from observing standard Vaiṣṇava *mahotsavas* such as Gaura-*jayantī* and Janmāṣṭamī, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī introduced festivals for commemorating both the *āvirbhāva* and *tirobhāva* of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and the *tirobhāvas* of the recent *ācāryas* Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī and Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī and of his own disciple Jagabandhu Bhakti Rañjana Prabhu. He also instituted commemorative functions on the anniversary of each individual Maṭha's inauguration. Especially impressive were the month-long annual celebration at Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Calcutta and similar extended festivals in Dacca and Purī. Another innovation, in 1926, was the holding of a *nāma-yajña* (nonstop *kīrtana*) for three days in Māyāpur, beginning on Nityānanda Prabhu's *āvirbhāva-tithi.*[*]

In Gauḍīya Maṭhas the popular celebrations of *gopī-līlās,* particularly Rāsa-yātrā and Jhulana-yātrā, were observed not by the traditional methods of enacting *rāsa-līlā* and swinging the deities of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, but by inviting members of the public to hear Hari-*kathā,* which as usual would be on philosophical topics, and to participate in *nāma-saṅkīrtana.* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would have a *jhulana* (swing) installed in his room and privately invite senior devotees to join him in gently rocking and serenading Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.[*]

The traditional Annakūṭa (Govardhana-*pūjā*) festival was first observed in Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha in 1930 with a massive feast. On 25 October 1930 the *Liberty* reported:

Annakūṭa Mahotsava

Over One Lakh Visitors at Gauḍīya Maṭha

The Annakūṭa Mahotsava was celebrated at the newly constructed temple of the Gauḍīya Maṭha at Baghbazar on the 22nd instant, and people hailing from various parts of the country poured in their thousands *(sic)* and the most modest calculation would place the number of pilgrims and visitors at over a lakh.

The presence of ladies and gentlemen of all denominations, caste, and creed—Hindus and Mohammedans, Christians and Jews, Buddhists and Jains, Brahmos and Āryas—from different quarters, testified to the cosmopolitan nature of the assembly. The special characteristic of the attendance was the presence of a very large number of ladies of the most aristocratic Hindu families of Calcutta.

The word *annakūṭa* literally means "a hill of food." It applies to the huge heaps of offerings to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda on the occasion of Govardhana-*pūjā*. It was held most ceremoniously at the temple of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, where the variety and extent of the offerings and the record number of pilgrims attending it far surpassed any religious ceremony of its kind, including the notable Annakūṭa Utsava at Benares. The hugeness of the hill of rice, the variety of preparations, the neat and beautiful order of their arrangement and tasteful decoration pleased all eyes.

Some five hundred varieties of delicious preparations of food were placed in the spacious hall of the *nāṭya-mandira* just in front of the temple. In the adjoining land a big pandal was erected where *mahā-prasāda* of various descriptions was distributed among the rich and poor alike. The feeding of the poor, numbering several thousand, formed a part of the celebrations. It is reported that one thousand maunds of rice were exhausted in course of the day.

The most remarkable feature is that no accident happened among the record gathering including ladies and children.[3]

Thereafter this festival was celebrated every year at Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha and in all other branch Maṭhas. The *Harmonist* reported that at Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha over five hundred items were prepared for Annakūṭa in 1931, and that more than a lakh of people, many of whom would not normally care for free handouts, clamored and competed for even a particle of that transcendental foodstuff. The *Gauḍīya* (10.16.249–52) listed 433 of the "innumerable" items offered at that festival.

In Purī, every evening throughout the twenty-one days of the Candana-yātrā festival, Madana-mohana, the *vijaya-vigraha* of Jagannātha, is taken for a boat ride around Narendra-sarovara to the accompaniment of music and clanging of gongs. During two days of Candana-yātrā in

1931, in a similar manner Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī regaled the *vijaya-vigraha* of Mahāprabhu from Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha by sitting on the boat and, assisted by Maṭha *pūjārīs,* personally attending the Lord while the other devotees performed *kīrtana* on the bank.

In 1936, all arrangements were set for the upcoming Govardhana-*pūjā* at Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha. But on the day before the occasion, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura suddenly declared that it should be celebrated in a manner unprecedented at that Maṭha. He asked all disciples who had assembled there from various parts of India to cook various regional specialties. Bengalis made items dear to Lord Caitanya, Oriyas prepared Lord Jagannātha's favorite dishes, and devotees from North India cooked delectables most relished by Lord Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana. The extensive open space in front of the temple became filled with an Annakūṭa surrounded by dozens of varieties of opulent preparations. The *Gauḍīya* described:

> Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja, Śrīpāda Hayagrīva Brahmacārī, Śrīpāda Sajjanānanda Brahmacārī, and others took great care to bring sumptuous foodstuff for the festival and to decorate the place. The devotees' residential quarters were beautifully decked with fruit, flowers, mango leaves, banana trees, coconuts, and waterpots. On the altar was a very beautiful embroidered canopy. All the way from the street to Caṭaka Parvata was festooned with flags, banana trees, waterpots, and arches. Different food items, such as white rice, yellow rice, *puṣpānna, khicaḍi, pāyasānna,* chapatis, puris, and so forth, were arranged in the shape of a mountain.[*] There were other mountains of food, such as the delicacies of Gauḍa-*deśa* described in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* those of Vraja described in *Śrī Govinda-līlāmṛta,* and all of Lord Jagannātha's favorite items. Also, an immeasurable amount of *mahā-prasāda,* consisting of many vegetable and grain preparations and sweets, was brought from the Jagannātha temple. *Tulasī* buds were placed on all the offerings, and then Śrīla Prabhupāda worshiped Śrī Govardhana while chanting prayers composed by Śrī Rūpa and Śrī Raghunātha. The festival proceeded with *saṅkīrtana.* Then on Śrīla Prabhupāda's instruction, Śrīpāda Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda read from the fourth chapter of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta's Madhya-līlā* about Śrīpāda Mādhavendra Purī's *annakūṭa* festival. Hundreds of people were fed *mahā-prasāda* that night, and the next morning hundreds of beggars and destitute people were fed.[4]

However, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura stressed that festivals should not be primarily gastronomical affairs. He said that real Govardhana-*pūjā* means heaps of *mahā-prasāda* rice and heaps of Hari-*kathā,* and he distinguished between the genuine *saṅkīrtana-mahotsava* of *śuddha* Vaiṣṇavas and what he dubbed the *mālpuyā-mahotsavas* of *prākṛta-sahajiyās.* The feeding of sadhus being scripturally ordained as a pious act to invoke *puṇya* and nullify bad karma, a class of men had arisen who knew how to dress as and play the part of sadhus to get invited to luscious feasts at which *mālpuyā* was a required specialty—neither hosts nor invitees being very fussy about one another's moral character. Yet Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura emphasized that the true essence of a *mahotsava* was not *mālpuyā* but *kīrtana.* This was substantiated in a *Gauḍīya* article which cited Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's explanation that festivals such as

those for Kṛṣṇa's appearance should be celebrated in *yajña-buddhyā* (the consciousness of sacrifice) and that *saṅkīrtana-yajña,* the recommended sacrifice for Kali-yuga, should be held rather than *aśvamedha-yajñas* (horse sacrifices) for temporary results. Moreover, *dakṣiṇā* (offering to the priests), essential in any *yajña,* means not standard presentations like cloth or money, but *jñāna-sandeśa*—preserving and also conveying to friends the realizations gained from participating in such festivals.[5]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī personified and established this ethic by spending festival days incessantly speaking Hari-*kathā,* both formally in speeches and informally to constant batches of visitors. Likewise, during festivals in major Maṭhas, every sannyasi and senior devotee would be engaged in Hari-*kathā,* so that throughout the day regular speeches interspersed with singing of *nāma-kīrtana,* as well as informal Hari-*kathā,* were held at different venues within the Maṭha.

Eighteen

Theistic Exhibitions

Another immense success, and probably Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's most popular preaching innovation, was the staging of diorama displays based on scriptural themes. These Theistic Exhibitions (*pradarśanīs*) required expert organization, months of planning, much hard work, and collection of huge funds. The Pradarśanīs became legendary for their beautiful displays coupled with a weighty message. Entrance was free. Between 1928 and 1936 a total of ten such exhibitions were held.

The first was in November 1928 at Kurukṣetra, staged to attract and educate the enormous crowds expected on the occasion of a solar eclipse. The exhibits depicted Kṛṣṇa and His friends coming to Kurukṣetra from Dvārakā and the Vraja-*vāsīs* arriving from Vṛndāvana to meet Him. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had twenty thousand handbills printed and circulated in the area, inviting all to the exhibition. The response was so encouraging that he became enthused to plan an extraordinarily elaborate exhibition for Māyāpur, which was inaugurated by the famous chemist Dr. Prafulla-candra Roy on 3 February 1930 (the auspicious day of Vasanta Pañcamī, marking the beginning of spring) and continued till 17 March, the date of Gaura-*jayantī* that year.

The exposition was divided into two sections, spiritual and secular, with items collected from every part of India, and the whole extravaganza covering more than one square mile. The secular division demonstrated miscellaneous departments of human endeavor—medical, educational, agricultural, arts and crafts, cattle and livestock, child welfare, athletics, and amusements. Several provincial governments sent materials to be displayed. Other attractions were performances of athletic feats such as gymnastics, wrestling, boxing, sword and stick play, and jujitsu. There were musical competitions, dramas, film shows, a circus, and in the words of the *Harmonist,* "other varieties of innocent amusements." Prizes, medals, and certificates were awarded to deserving exhibitors and performers.

The spiritual section was even more elaborate. A museum contained figures of Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa, and other religious objects such as memorabilia formerly used by reputed sadhus. A book display featured volumes produced by different religious sects in diverse languages and manuscripts of rare unpublished religious works. There were photos and paintings of eminent sadhus and sundry sacred places. A major draw was a huge relief map of India—occupying over a third of an acre—constructed on the ground with stone, cement, and brick and showing prominent holy places, the locations of all Gauḍīya Maṭha branches, and the routes of Śrī Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda's tours. Dioramas in over fifty stalls depicted manifold religious praxes of India, with emphasis on Caitanya Mahāprabhu's teachings. The practices of pure Vaiṣṇavas, pseudo-Vaiṣṇavas, and other religious sects were illustrated by life-size dolls set against backgrounds of appropriate painted scenes, many representing incidents in the pastimes

of Lord Caitanya. Another novelty for numerous visitors was the brilliant illumination of the entire grounds by recently installed electricity.

The crowds that came from all over Bengal despite the remoteness and inaccessibility of Māyāpur, returned home enraptured by the wonderful activities of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and the Gauḍīya Maṭha, and substantially enlightened as to the true teachings of Caitanya Mahāprabhu in contrast to the prevalent distorted versions. After this Exhibition the Gauḍīya Maṭha received multiple requests from leading citizens of different parts of India to stage similar shows in their locales.

Later that year another Theistic Exhibition was organized in Calcutta, opening exactly a month after the inauguration of the new temple in Bāg-bazar. Yet the one that really captured public attention was held in Calcutta from 6 to 23 September 1931. During this period over a million people attended, coming not just from Calcutta, but also from surrounding towns and villages, distant parts of Bengal, and even other provinces of India. Some foreign visitors also attended. Because the crowds so voluminously exceeded the projected estimate, there was difficulty in regulating them, yet ultimately everything transpired well. The event was held on a spacious lawn opposite the Maṭha. Śrī Prafullanath Tagore, sheriff of Calcutta, inaugurated the proceedings, concluding his speech by publicly offering *daṇḍavat* to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. During opening hours, seven o'clock in the morning till ten at night, local volunteers guided the throngs through the grounds in as orderly a manner as possible. Separate routes and resting sheds were provided for women. There were eighty-five exhibits, featuring themes such as "The Gauḍīya Sannyasi," "Gauḍīya Publications," various pastimes and avatars of the Lord, and the worship of the demigods Sūrya, Śiva, Gaṇeśa, Brahmā, and Durgā.

However, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura did not want that visitors simply look, be impressed, and go away. His aim was to educate—and not in a primary, vague, or merely theoretical manner.

> The Exhibition is not to be considered as a rough method of presenting the truth, suited to the requirements of the unlettered masses. On the contrary it should be considered as being analogous to the application of the principles of the mathematical science for the solution of the actual needs of man. The mathematician does not suppose that it is the goal of mathematics to remain a subject of abstract speculation inaccessible to the unlettered masses.[1]

To help convey the intended philosophical message, devotees were assigned to escort groups of people around the stalls and explain the subjects. Pamphlets in Bengali and English, circulated for a nominal price, presented novel explications of the well-known pastimes on display. For instance, the diorama depicting the killing of Hiraṇyakaśipu by Nṛsiṁha-deva, entitled "Absolute Truth Kills Anti-Theism or Empiricism," included the following text written by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura:

> The innate insufficiency and utter delusiveness of empiric wisdom is not brought home to the empiricist till he actually realizes the superior contra-existence of the Absolute. The

destructive and terrible face of the Transcendental Reality is necessarily the first positively disillusioning experience of the Absolute to any challenging empiricist to whom the Absolute is pleased to disclose Himself, as an act of His causeless favor. The retributive aspect of the process need not blind the sincere inquirer of the Absolute to the overwhelming mercy of this method of appearance of the Absolute that alone could be acceptable from the point of view of the challenger, although the latter has to pay for such experience by undergoing the suffering of total destruction of his delusive personality which is misrepresented as his soul by his own empirical judgment.

The disemboweling process indicates the rottenness of the physical body and the necessity of its destruction for enabling the conditioned soul to realize the nature of perfect unconditional spiritual existence of the soul as the normal state.

Śrī Nṛsiṁha-deva, even in the light of these considerations, must however appear to empirical judgment as presenting the front of the retributive personality of brute force, which is the only proof of real existence to the empiricist, but in singular and somewhat grotesque combination with the principle of rationality detectable only in the human personality.[2]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura explained that apart from the conventional meaning of *pradarśanī* (exhibition), this word also implies *prakṛṣṭa-rūpeṇa-darśana* (thorough and complete seeing), and he elucidated how such *darśana* was attainable:

The *ācārya* teaches the absolute truth. He does not want the spectators to regard the Exhibition through their erring senses under the guidance of their erring minds. Neither does he want the visitors to speculate on what they see in any way that they like. He wants them to be prepared to experience what is absolutely inaccessible to their present senses and mental outlook. Any person who visits the Exhibition in accordance with the intention of the *ācārya,* is likely to find himself on definite track of the absolute.[3]

The Theistic Exhibition differs from the mere lifeless, symbolical representation of the realm of the absolute. If an empirical scholar of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* conceives the idea of conveying the meaning of the scriptures by means of scenic representations, the result will be lifeless and ineffectual and will never impart any actual spiritual experience. To go round such a show may be effective in the empirical sense which is only calculated to delude. Regarded from the point of view of the empirical scholar, the Theistic Exhibition organized under the guidance of the *ācārya* may appear to be on a level with his own futile performance. It is possible even for such a deluded person, if only he is inclined to pay his unbiased attention to the words of the *ācārya* explaining the truths revealed by the Exhibition, to be convinced as far as his limited powers of understanding allow, of the categorical difference between the spiritual activity of the devotee of Godhead and the mundane performances of a conditioned soul, who has no real access to the divinity.[4]

This ingenious combination of philosophy and visual presentation attracted both the masses and the educated alike. Upon beholding the Calcutta exhibition Dr. Dineśa-candra Sena remarked:

> The Bengalis as a race are full of enthusiasm, but their sentiments are often found to flicker and die away, though they hold out promise of steady action at the outset. But the Gauḍīya Maṭha has given a quite different account of its activities. It does not pursue any will-o-the-wisp vague shining theories, but in a quiet and sure manner does a solid constructive work, which has elicited appreciation from the whole of Bengal without much fuss or noise. The temple at Bāg-bazar and the institution founded in it are glorious achievements for which we should be proud. It is indeed a great surprise to see this temple flourish as if by the touch of a magician's wand.
>
> The rush of people from all parts of Bengal and many of the neighboring provinces to visit the Theistic Exhibition is evidence of the popularity and fame achieved by its founder Śrīmad Prabhupāda Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. He is truly a leader of men, erudite, saintly, and full of personal charm that exercises a hypnotic influence on all who come in contact with him.
>
> The Exhibition in which the felicitous Vaiṣṇava philosophy has been illustrated by clay figures evinces the great power of the person who conceived the idea of making the most intricate doctrines of Vaiṣṇava theology popular and simple by symbolical illustration, which makes the philosophical truths promulgated in the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* accessible to very ordinary people. The whole Exhibition is a regular panorama of scenes of high religious significance, and I am sure that the masses of Bengal will now learn to realize Hindu spiritual philosophy without any academic culture. The institutions of the Vaiṣṇavas generally promulgate emotional felicities, but there is a cultural element which forms the most striking feature of the Gauḍīya Maṭha. The people are pouring in hundreds and thousands from all places and it is a wonderful thing to behold how without much notice or advertisement the function has created a stir among the masses which one would attribute to psychic force or some other esoteric impetus not easily comprehensible to us.[5]

And Assistant Secretary J.N. Sircar, government of Bengal, stated:

> The Exhibition is unique of its kind, and the arrangement of the exhibits and the facilities for the convenience of the visitors are excellent. Even to an ordinary layman, meaning has been made intelligible to all by means of symbols and texts. No pain has been spared by the authorities to make the Exhibition a success, and they deserve the greatest credit for the immense good they are doing toward the uplift of ordinary laymen, who never think of such things unless placed before them in a manner they can easily understand.[6]

Yet not everyone was thrilled with the exhibitions. One diorama showed a *brāhmaṇa* sitting before an altar and breaking nuts with a *śālagrāma-śilā,* thus depicting Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's self-coined Bengali apothegm *śālagrāma-dvārā bādām bhāṅgā,* "using a *śālagrāma-śilā* for cracking nuts," which highlights the attitude of worshiping simply to obtain

material benefit. This motif so aroused the ire of certain *brāhmaṇas* that they filed a civil case against the Gauḍīya Maṭha in an attempt to shut down the exhibition. Their main objection was that the *śālagrāma* exhibit was discriminatory, for many Vaiṣṇavas also performed worship for worldly gains. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura agreed that this was true of many putative Vaiṣṇavas and suggested that Vaiṣṇava *tilaka* be painted on the forehead of the nut-cracking *brāhmaṇa.* The objecting *brāhmaṇas* then realized that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's demur was not to target *brāhmaṇas* as a community, but to demonstrate the principle that a sham of spiritual life should not be adopted as a means of livelihood. So they accepted his proposal and withdrew the litigation.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī revealed that over and above their being propaganda designed to attract nondevotees to *bhakti,* and persons misdirected by false representations of *bhakti* to the path of *śuddha-bhakti,* the Theistic Exhibitions were directly connected to the internal esoteric plane: "The only subject shown at the Māyāpur Pradarśanī will be that of residence on the banks of Rādhā-kuṇḍa and demonstrating that Rādhā-kuṇḍa is approachable solely by Gauḍīyas."[*] Similarly, he stated that the purpose of the 1933 Dacca Theistic Exhibition was specified in a famous verse by Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī:

> *vairāgya-yug-bhakti-rasaṁ prayatnair*
> *apāyayan mām anabhīpsum andham*
> *kṛpāmbudhir yaḥ para-duḥkha-duḥkhī*
> *sanātanas taṁ prabhum āśrayāmi*
>
> I was unwilling to drink the *rasa* of *bhakti* possessed of renunciation, yet out of his causeless mercy Sanātana Gosvāmī forced me to drink it, even though I was blind and otherwise unable to do so. He is an ocean of mercy, who feels unhappiness in the distress of others. I take shelter of that *prabhu.*[7]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī further explained:

> The endeavor for the manifestation of the Exhibition is due to the faith of the openers of the Theistic Exhibition and of the congregation, who associate themselves with them in the eternal and absolute truth of the line of succession of the servants of the self-same Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī Prabhu.[8]

Nineteen

Dhāma-sevā

Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma

For years, local *jāta-gosāñis* had advertised various places in the modern town of Navadvīpa as the genuine birthsite of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Yet by studying old maps and literature, perusing archaeological findings, and making local inquiries, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura came to suspect that the actual spot was near the Muslim village of Māyāpur, on the bank of the Gaṅgā opposite Kuliyā. After seeing an otherworldly effulgence emanating from that area, he took Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī there. By spiritual perception, Bābājī Mahārāja confirmed it to be the true birthsite of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Subsequently, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura established a temple of Lord Caitanya in Māyāpur, and by presenting the considerable evidence he had amassed, he gradually convinced many educated people that Māyāpur is the authentic birthplace of Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

In 1891 Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had spearheaded the founding of Navadvīpa-dhāma-pracāriṇī Sabhā to oversee activities at and maintenance of the Yogapīṭha, to develop the *dhāma,* to establish Śrī Māyāpur as the genuine birthplace of Caitanya Mahāprabhu in opposition to unmitigated claims, and ultimately to spread the message of Navadvīpa throughout the world.[*] Because of the sacred objectives of the *sabhā,* its archeological, geographical, historical, and literary research, and its being composed of influential persons—including royalty, highly placed governmental officers, prominent zamindars, lawyers, doctors, and businessmen—it was much respected and was gradually able to convince all (except those with vested interests or inveterate prejudice) that Māyāpur was indeed the actual location of Lord Caitanya's *āvirbhāva.*

After the departure of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī took up the helm of the *sabhā* and invested much energy in developing Śrī Navadvīpa-*dhāma,* especially Māyāpur. He wanted that many people visit Māyāpur for their own immediate spiritual benefit, to afford them an opportunity to render Hari-*sevā* for increasing the prestige of the *dhāma,* and to apprise visitors that despite its apparent obscurity and remoteness, Māyāpur is the epicenter of the transcendental realm. Yet when he first assumed responsibility for overseeing its growth, to external vision Māyāpur was still a little-known wilderness, accessible only by boat and then walking through agricultural fields and overgrowth. Like most of India and the world at that time, life continued basically in the way it had for centuries, with no paved roads, electricity, postal services, or anything else suggestive of modern civilization. Supplies had to be manually lugged in over the rough narrow tracks between fields. Amid a few mud-and-thatch huts typical of rural Bengal were only two small brick buildings: the temple built by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura at the Yogapīṭha and the residence made by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī at Vrajapattana. Considering that few people would sufficiently appreciate the sanctity of Śrī Māyāpur to undertake the demanding journey thereto solely for spiritual reasons, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī initiated various development projects.

From 1918, when he accepted *sannyāsa* and started preaching in a systematic manner, till his departure in 1937, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī enhanced Māyāpur by building two major

temples, one at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha and the other at the Yogapīṭha, several smaller temples, and also shrines, guesthouses, gardens, ponds, educational institutions, libraries, and all other necessary infrastructure for a prominent place of pilgrimage. Despite the remote location, electricity and telephone connections were made, although most villages in India did not get these until decades later. During festivals, the decorative lighting that entwined the Yogapīṭha temple tower could be seen in the rural landscape from miles around; it also charmingly illuminated the nearby Gaṅgā's waves.

A significant enhancement that permanently changed the face of Māyāpur was an embankment that served two vital functions: protection from Gaṅgā floods and providing an access road. Starting just above Hulor Ghat, on the Sarasvatī River opposite Svarupganj, the embankment extended more than two and a half miles—almost two miles to the Yogapītha, a further six hundred yards to Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, followed by a final six-hundred-yard stretch. The path was called Advaita Prasāda Saraṇī, or simply Advaita Saraṇī, after Śrī Advaita Prasāda Dey, a sub-judge of Midnapore District, who, upon observing difficulties faced by pilgrims during the rainy season, offered to bear the cost for metaling the path between the Yogapītha and Śrī Caitanya Maṭha.[*] Later Sakhī Caraṇa Bhakti Vijaya Prabhu sponsored its extension up to Hulor Ghat, after which the full road became known as Bhaktisiddhānta Saraṇī. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī commented that this was the path of *advaya-jñāna* leading to the place of Śrī Caitanya's teachings. The Caitanya Maṭha owned a boat for transporting visitors across the river from Kuliyā to Māyāpur. If the approach was muddy when distinguished visitors were scheduled, straw was spread on the road and a car or horsecart was sent to bring them from the landing point to the Maṭha.

Another milestone was the opening in June 1929 of a post office (which marked governmental recognition of Māyāpur's growing importance), facilitating dispatch of books and magazines and regular correspondence between the Mission's spiritual headquarters and its itinerant preachers, headed by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura himself.

These developments did much to establish the importance of Māyāpur-*dhāma* among the public, for many were still susceptible to unfounded propaganda that Lord Caitanya's birthplace is within the modern town of Navadvīpa, not Māyāpur. Pilgrims were charmed by the peaceful, cultured ambiance of Māyāpur and the gravity of its resident sadhus, in contrast to the money-hustling atmosphere of Kuliyā. Gradually more and more visitors came to prefer Māyāpur over Kuliyā—which further contributed to the Navadvīpa *gosāñis'* loss of prestige and earnings.

Yet Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura did not regard these exoteric improvements as the essence of his service to the *dhāma*. Although materialists may consider that laying roads, excavating ponds, sinking tube-wells, and arranging for a post office and electricity are laudable village-uplift projects, his only intention in making such arrangements was to glorify Śrī Gaurasundara and promote His teachings. He wanted to attract the public to Māyāpur and educate them that Māyāpur was both the gateway to and nondifferent from Vṛndāvana.

However, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī vetoed the planned laying of a branch railway line

from Dhubuliya to Māyāpur and construction of a bridge over the Gaṅgā from Navadvīpa to Māyāpur, fearing that by giving easy access to all stripes of hodgepodge people, Māyāpur would become as commercialized as modern Navadvīpa. Privately he said, "Don't increase the weight of the *dhāma* by bringing materialistic people here to pass stool." He wanted that except during festivals, the pristine environment suitable for *bhajana* be preserved, and that only devotees serious about *bhajana* and *sevā* reside at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha. Thus he instructed the *maṭha-rakṣaka* Narahari Prabhu that any *maṭha-vāsī* inclined to sense indulgence be transferred to the Maṭha in Bombay, it being a city of sense enjoyment, and any *maṭha-vāsī* inordinately disturbed by the summer heat be sent during that season to the Maṭha in Darjeeling, where the mountain atmosphere remains pleasantly cool.

At the outset of excavating the foundation for the new temple at the Yogapīṭha, begun at an auspicious moment on an auspicious day in June 1934, a small bas-relief of Viṣṇu was unearthed. All present were astonished at this discovery, and they happily performed an *abhiṣeka* (bathing ceremony) of the deity. The entire Yogapīṭha area rang with the sound of *jaya*! A devotee was sent to Calcutta convey the news to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, who ascertained that according to *Siddhārtha-saṁhitā,* the way in which the weapons were held in His four hands indicated that the deity was Adhokṣaja Viṣṇu. Having repeatedly instructed his disciples about the Supreme Lord's *adhokṣaja* nature, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī ascribed this find not to mere serendipity but to the Lord's desire to reveal Himself, as if to practically demonstrate the theological principle of divine revelation: although inaccessible to the material senses, He can show Himself as He wishes, and is pleased to manifest Himself to the *sevonmukha.* Archeologists who were called to inspect the find concurred that this type of deity was commonly worshiped in Bengal in the era of Lord Caitanya's appearance; and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī conclusively identified the icon as the household deity of Jagannātha Miśra (Caitanya Mahāprabhu's father).

A less happy incident also occured during construction of the new Yogapīṭha temple. While Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was absent, without his knowledge or approval the remnants of an ancient wall were destroyed and the bricks thrown away by order of the supervising engineer, who was unaware of their importance in indicating the antiquity of that area.

In Māyāpur, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī once explained how Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was particularly enthusiastic for serving Vaiṣṇavas by building residential facilities in the *dhāma* and offering them items (especially fruit, vegetables, and other edibles) coming from the *dhāma.* He related how Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura used to say that all things coming from the *dhāma,* even its water and air, are fully saturated with the quality of serving Kṛṣṇa, and that by serving these items a person could imbibe such quality of service. Hearing this an engineer friend said, "I think the water and air here are better for my health." Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī responded, "It is not a question of better health for either the somatic or subtle body; that is all sensual enjoyment. The wellbeing of the soul is to be aroused, which comes from serving Kṛṣṇa. Bodily health is mundane pleasure or *karma-jñāna-anyābhilāṣa.* One must serve the *dhāma,* not offend it by trying to enjoy its paraphernalia. Ordinary materialists cannot

understand how Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was absorbed in serving the *dhāma.*"[1]

He described how appreciation of the *dhāma* had been imparted to him by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura:

> Our Lord Caitanya was pleased to appear in this *śrī-dhāma* in order to waken the world to consciousness of its real nature. But unfortunately we were not aware of the glory and majesty of the *dhāma.* Hence we so long busied ourselves with other activities. We had no taste for the service of the *dhāma.* We had no faith in the worship of the forms of God. We engaged ourselves in studies and labored under the idea of dominating over the people of the world by our empirical reasoning, scholarship, genius, and force of moral character. But a great soul directed us for the first time to the service of the *dhāma,* with the advice that all good would be gained by such service. The preaching of *śrī-dhāma* in the present time is the outcome of the efforts of that great soul who engaged us in the simultaneous service of the holy name, the abode, and the desire of Kṛṣṇa. We wish and pray that his teachings and ideal may encourage all of us to the service of *śrī-dhāma.* Because the service of the *śrī-dhāma* will lead us, as a matter of course, to the service of the holy name and the holy desire of Kṛṣṇa. Relation with the worldly abode, and hankering after the ordinary worldly life, soon cease for one who realizes his relationship with *śrī-dhāma.* Relationship with *śrī-dhāma* being established, the means of the service of the holy name soon brings one to the goal of the service of Kṛṣṇa's desire, and this is the only object of life.[2*]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī expressed his love for Navadvīpa-*dhāma:*

> Śrī Navadvīpa-*dhāma* is the sacred site most cherished by devotees of the Lord. Here remembrance of Him is awakened everywhere. That is why I have a special desire to live here for some more days. But if necessary for serving the Lord, I shall go to Calcutta and other places.[3]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's own attachment for service at the Yogapīṭha sprang not only from his being an eternal resident of Māyāpur, but also from Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's order that he serve and oversee affairs there. After starting his post-*sannyāsa* preaching career, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura ostensibly remained largely outside of Māyāpur, yet wherever he went and whatever he did, he never considered that he was anywhere other than at the Yogapīṭha serving Mahāprabhu's divine lotus feet. Addressing the annual convocation of the Navadvīpa-dhāma-pracāriṇī Sabhā in 1926, he revealed:

> Previously I heard from Śrī Gurudeva that the specific way to make our life's endeavors suitable for *bhakti* is to remain in *śrī-dhāma* to serve *śrī-dhāma,* maintaining our life with natural produce from the *dhāma.* Without being enamored by the world of *māyā,* the place devoid of Hari-*sevā,* if we reside in the *dhāma* and perpetually chant *harināma* and perform Hari-*bhajana,* then quickly we can attain the mercy of Gaura and His devotees.

At that time these instructions of Śrī Gurudeva did not enter my ear. I thought that if I live in *śrī-dhāma* and utilize its comestibles, then I will develop the mentality of enjoying *śrī-dhāma.* With that attitude how could I succeed in *bhajana*? I considered that if I were to serve *śrī-dhāma* by practical work, I would get stuck in materialistic activities like the sense-enjoyers. Presently, despite being wholly unqualified, I have considered to go to that place known as the world of *māyā,* the city of Calcutta, for the purpose of serving *śrī-dhāma.*

With this impure body, I am not fit to roll in the dust of *śrī-dhāma.* Yet I also cannot understand how I could forsake service to *śrī-dhāma* and go somewhere else. Specifically for serving *śrī-dhāma,* by Śrī Gaurasundara's desire I became situated elsewhere. I am firmly convinced that Śrī Gaurasundara did not bring his unqualified servant to another place to become bewildered by opulence and dalliances, or contaminated by sense-gratificatory endeavors. I reside elsewhere, but in the knowledge illuminated by the radiance of *śrī-dhāma.* Those many devotees who are kind to me always relate the glories of the Lord's transcendental *dhāma,* so wherever I may be I cannot but think of *śrī-dhāma.* Thus those places are included in Gauḍa-*maṇḍala,* the land of transcendental pastimes that is *śrī-dhāma* Navadvīpa.[4] [*]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's supramundane vision of the *dhāma* and his service to it became apparent during a somewhat heated altercation that arose after one of his leading disciples arranged an exchange of some land slated for excavating Śrī Gaura-kuṇḍa. He told that disciple, "I asked you to purchase the land, not trade it for another. The land you are prepared to swap is also necessary for a future purpose of mine."[†] Becoming absorbed in transcendental sentiments, he uttered, "The whole land of Mahāprabhu and His temple will be decorated with superconscious materials of diamonds and gold. I shall discover the entirety of the *dhāma* and reveal it to the eyes of everyone in the world. If I need money, just by selling one brick of the temple I shall get millions, and with that I shall totally restore the *dhāma* and demonstrate what sort of opulence and majesty it possesses."[5]

In accord with Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's desire to broadcast the splendor of Māyāpur-*dhāma,* construction of a magnificent twenty-nine-pinnacle white marble temple, for which he had personally given the design concept, began at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha in March 1923 and was completed in November 1926. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī inaugurated the temple by installing deities of Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga–Vinoda-Prāṇa Jīu. The outer part of the sanctum housed shrines for the founding *ācāryas* of the four Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas:* Madhva, Viṣṇusvāmī, Nimbārka, and Rāmānuja.

As with all temples that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura established, those in Māyāpur, despite being far from population hubs, were meant to throb with activities for the uplift of human society. He reiterated Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's assurance that genuine service to Śrī Māyāpur is not *nirjana-bhajana,* but to establish a printing press and to propagate devotional books and Nāma-haṭṭa.[*] He made known the desired goal of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha:

At the portal of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, which is situated in the birthplace of Caitanya Mahāprabhu at Māyāpur, shall be written *bhaktir vijayate:* "*Bhakti* is ever glorious." In the center, near the Avidyā-haraṇa Sārasvata Nāṭya-mandira, should be written *saṅkīrtanaṁ vijayatetarām:* "*Saṅkīrtana* is always superlatively glorious." There at every step *ceto-darpaṇa-mārjana,* at every step *bhava-mahā-dāvāgni-nirvāpaṇa,* at every step *śreyaḥ-kairava-candrikā-vitaraṇa,* at every step *vidyā-vadhū-jīvana,* at every step *ānandāmbudhi-vardhana,* at every step *pūrṇāmṛtāsvādana,* at every step *sarvātma-snapana*, there will be a fire-pit constantly blazing with the seven-tongued flame of *śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana,* so that even at the time of universal destruction the fire of *śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana* will not be extinguished at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha—it will remain always burning. From this fire-pit of *saṅkīrtana,* people will become purified by accepting the name and mantra of Kṛṣṇa through initiation, and thereby householders will accomplish all their *saṁskāras.* When that happens, instead of mundane brahmanism and absorption in householder life, there will be revival of absorption in *saṅkīrtana* and activities of the Maṭha.

Next to Rādhā-kuṇḍa in Śrī Caitanya Maṭha should be written *premā-vijayatetamām:* "The highest degree of glory reposes in pure love of Kṛṣṇa." Here there will be no trace of lust or desire for individual sense gratification. Here will reign supreme the wholesale gratification of Śrī Rādhā-Govinda's senses. If the flame of *ceto-darpaṇa-mārjana* does not shine brightly, then the spotless mirror of the heart will be covered by the dust and detritus of *anarthas* such as mutual bad feelings, censoriousness, envy, duplicity, and hatred. With the spread of various weeds, many forests of *anarthas* will be created whereby *bhava-mahā-dāvāgni* (the forest fire of material life) will simply increase.

Whoever is intelligent now, or will be in the future, can realize the victorious nature of Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement. Those of little brain will accept other processes and goals, while those who are intelligent worship by *saṅkīrtana* that great personality who is golden in complexion. May the seven-tongued fire of *saṅkīrtana,* kindled by the intelligent, remain burning constantly at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha. The meditation of Satya-yuga, the elaborate sacrifices of Tretā-yuga, and the grand temple worship of Dvāpara-yuga will all be accomplished simply by Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana.* Because all four legs of dharma were intact in Satya-yuga, everyone could perform meditation; with three legs of dharma intact in Tretā-yuga, people could perform sacrifices; with two legs remaining in Dvāpara-yuga, people could perform temple worship. But in Kali-yuga, Lord Caitanya comes as the deliverer of the fallen and introduces *saṅkīrtana,* giving the easy opportunity to simultaneously accomplish the goals attainable through meditation, sacrifice, and temple worship.[6]

In 1929, Sakhī Caraṇa Bhakti Vijaya Prabhu presented to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura a two-story sixteen-room house within the compound of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, having lavishly furnished it with a four-poster bed, full-length mirror, upholstered chairs, elegant tables, and other fittings. These amenities were to facilitate Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's *bhajana,* especially his writing, so

that he would not have to leave the *dhāma* to find the peace and concentration required for literary pursuits. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura also liked to write in the shade of the jackfruit tree at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha.

Every Gaura-*jayantī,* huge crowds congregated in Kuliyā to visit the two rival alleged birthsites of Lord Caitanya there. To attract them across the river to Māyāpur, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura hired professional theatrical groups to perform popular religious plays, such as *Hariścandra* and *Nimāi-sannyāsa.* But intrinsically disapproving such catchpenny dramas, he forbad his disciples to watch them.

In 1930 Māyāpur became really famous after the extraordinarily wonderful Theistic Exhibition held there for six weeks during February and March.[*] Although due to its remoteness it was inevitable that Māyāpur would be superseded by Calcutta as the strategic nucleus of Gauḍīya Maṭha activities, still, despite all successes elsewhere, Māyāpur remained the irreplaceable spiritual citadel of the burgeoning movement:

> The Gauḍīya Maṭha is the principal branch of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha of Śrīdhāma Māyāpur. The distinction between the Gauḍīya Maṭha and Śrī Caitanya Maṭha is analogous to that between one lamp lighted by another. The Gauḍīya Maṭha is the expansion of the Śrī Caitanya Maṭha in a visible form into the heart of this world. Even when manifested to the view of the people of this world, Śrī Caitanya Maṭha is eternally located as the original source in the transcendental environment of the eternal abode of the divinity. The activities of the Gauḍīya Maṭha and other sister branch Maṭhas are, however, essentially identical with those of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha. The offshoots of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha are an extension of the center of the bestowal of grace for the benefit of souls in all parts of the world. The recognition of the connection with Śrīdhāma Māyāpur is vital for realizing the true nature of the Gauḍīya Maṭha and the grace of the Ācārya.[7]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī once overheard some devotees from Śrī Caitanya Maṭha and Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha discussing which of the two *maṭhas* was superior. Intervening, he clarified, "Lord Caitanya is present at Caitanya Maṭha, and Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas reside in the Gauḍīya Maṭha. At the Caitanya Maṭha, Lord Caitanya is worshiped; at the Gauḍīya Maṭha, the devotees of Lord Caitanya, the Gauḍīyas, are worshiped. The Gauḍīyas follow Lord Caitanya and therefore the Gauḍīya Maṭha follows the Caitanya Maṭha." Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī called Śrī Caitanya Maṭha *ākara-maṭha-rāja* (the original, and king, of all *maṭhas*)—the fountainhead of all other branches of the Gauḍīya Maṭha and its related organizations, both then and for the future.

Due to the noisome behavior of the man on whose land Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja's *samādhi* was placed, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had long since stopped going there. Then due to erosion by the Gaṅgā, in August 1932 the *samādhi* became inundated.[*] Despite physical and juridical attempts to thwart them, devotees of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha located and retrieved the *samādhi* from the flooding Gaṅgā water and, to the accompaniment of *saṅkīrtana,* brought the remaining portion of Bābājī Mahārāja's sacred form to Māyāpur by boat. (That a

part of his transcendental body had entered the Gaṅgā was in accordance with Bābājī Mahārāja's express desire that his bodily remains be committed therein.) At that time Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was in Calcutta overseeing the Gauḍīya Maṭha's annual festival, after which he returned to the *dhāma* to inaugurate regular services to his guru-*mahārāja.* Although some disciples proposed that the intended *samādhi* in Māyāpur be constructed at Advaita Bhavan—in deference to Bābājī Mahārāja's having been initiated in the Advaita-*vaṁśa*— Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura overrode that suggestion and, in accord with Bābājī Mahārāja's internal *svarūpa,* erected the *samādhi* on the bank of Rādhā-kuṇḍa at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha.

On 20 March 1935, Gaura-*jayantī,* the doors of a superb new temple at the Yogapīṭha were swung open by Mahārāja Vīra-vikrama Kiśora-deva Varma Māṇikya Bāhādura Dharma-dhurandhara of Tripura, who in his speech declared that his great-grandfather had assisted in erecting the first temple at that site and his grandfather had helped establish the deities of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava there.[*] Fully funded by Sakhī Caraṇa Bhakti Vijaya Prabhu, this new edifice replaced the cottage wherein Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had established worship of Śrī Gaura-Viṣṇupriyā, Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, and another deity of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Therein Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī also revealed service to the deities of Lakṣmīpriyā, Pañca-tattva, Jagannātha, and Adhokṣaja Viṣṇu. The *Gauḍīya* commented that this new sanctuary was the fulfilment of a prediction by Lord Nityānanda:

> *adbhuta mandira eka haibe prakāśa*
> *gaurāṅga nitya-sevā haibe vikāśa*
>
> One wonderful temple will manifest, wherefrom eternal service to Lord Gaurāṅga will expand.[8]

Other improvements effected by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī at the Yogapīṭha included construction of brick temples to supersede the previous simple structures for the other deities established by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. A shrine was erected to represent the maternity room of Śacīmātā, with a figure of her sitting next to a cot holding baby Nimāi.[9] [†] Directly behind that, another small temple housed two Śiva-*liṅgas:* Kṣetrapāla Mahādeva, Lord Śiva in his role as protector of the *dhāma,* who had been installed by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and the smaller form known as Gopīśvara Mahādeva, who was originally installed by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in the Rudradvīpa Gauḍīya Maṭha but was later shifted to the Yogapīṭha when the flooding Gaṅgā appeared likely to inundate Rudravīpa.[*] Also at the Yogapīṭha, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī established a *samādhi* for his pure devotee mother, Śrīmatī Bhagavatī-devī, and above it adjoining forms of Śrī Gaura-Gadādhara and Śrī Lakṣmī-Nṛsiṁha.[†] And he had brick temples built at Śrīvāsa Aṅgana and Advaita Bhavan, both adjacent to Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, to replace the mud-and-grass huts erected there by disciples of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura wanted his disciples to maintain a strong link with Śrīdhāma Māyāpur, and accordingly directed them to visit at least once yearly, particularly for the festival culminating on Gaura-*pūrṇimā.* He cited as a precedent that during the manifest pastimes of

Mahāprabhu, devotees from Bengal visited Him each year in Purī.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura vaticinated that many Vaiṣṇava villages, neighborhoods, *maṭhas,* and temples would develop in Māyāpur, and that tumultuous *saṅkīrtana* accompanied by the sound of conchs, bells, *karatālas,* and *mṛdaṅgas* would be heard. To further this initiative, on 12 February 1936 during celebrations for his sixty-second birthday, he established two institutions: the Daiva-varṇāśrama-saṅgha, based at Avidyā-haraṇa Śravaṇa-sadana of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, and the Anukūla-Kṛṣṇānuśīlanāgāra (or Thakur Bhakti Vinode Research Institute), its office near Śrīvāsa Aṅgana.[‡] In the inaugural address he explained that *anukūla* (favorable) does not modify *anuśīlana* (cultivation), as is the general usage, but indicates the Kṛṣṇa of Rādhā—not of Candrāvalī, Śaibyā, or other opposing *gopīs*—that Anukūlā is a name of Rādhā, only by and through whom Kṛṣṇa can be truly satisfied, and that the ultimate purpose of the Anukūla Kṛṣṇānuśīlanāgāra was to demonstrate Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's love in separation from Kṛṣṇa. It was envisaged as having an extensive library to preserve classic religious books of India. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was the president of both institutions, which were to operate parallel to the broader Gauḍīya Maṭha confederation. Leading disciples were appointed to other major posts.[10] [*]

Among other projects that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī desired be undertaken within Navadvīpa-*dhāma,* was to establish on each of the nine islands a temple corresponding to the process of *bhakti* connected with that island. Each temple would house an *āśraya-vigraha* deity of the individual devotee most famous for having performed that activity of the nine-fold devotional process, depicted performing his specific mode of worship toward his *viṣaya-vigraha.* For instance, in Koladvīpa, the island of *pāda-sevanam* (worship of the Lord's lotus feet), would be a temple of Śrī Lakṣmīdevī, who is the exemplar of *pāda-sevanam,* and of her worshipable deity Śrī Nārāyaṇa; and in Jahnudvīpa, the island of *vandanam* (prayer), should be a temple of Akrūra, the exemplar of *vandanam,* and of his worshipable deity Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Restoring Lost Sites

In *Navadvīpa-dhāma-māhātmya* and *Navadvīpa-bhāva-taraṅga,* Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had mentioned many divine places manifest in Navadvīpa-*dhāma* that previously were unknown. With the help of disciples and associates he had determined the locations of and to some extent redeveloped Mahāprabhu's birthplace, and also Śrīvāsa Aṅgana and Advaita Bhavan, the site of the home of Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura and Advaita Ācārya respectively. His heart in accord with the inner intentions of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda, and expert in fulfilling those wishes, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī revealed several more such sacred sites for the benefit of the world. He excavated Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa and manifested and developed Īśodyāna within the compound of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha.[†] Īśodyāna was tastefully adorned with varieties of flora suitable for Kṛṣṇa's service, such as fruit trees, flowering vines, and all kinds of exotic foliage. Similarly, in 1920 at the Yogapīṭha, he had Gaura-kuṇḍa (Lord Caitanya's pond) excavated, and in 1931 Nitāi-kuṇḍa (Lord Nityānanda's pond). Although there is no mention of such ponds in the recorded pastimes of Lord Caitanya, it is understood that they were manifested by the spiritual vision of an eternal associate of Lord Caitanya, namely Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta

Sarasvatī.[*]

By transcendental vision, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura ascertained the Yogapīṭha (the birthplace of Lord Caitanya) to be nondifferent from the birthsite of Kṛṣṇa in Mathurā.[†] And he considered Śrīvāsa Aṅgana the most important location in Navadvīpa-*dhāma*. Identical with Vraja's principal spot, Rāsa-sthalī, where Kṛṣṇa eternally dances and sings with the *gopīs* in *rāsa-līlā,* Śrīvāsa Aṅgana was the *saṅkīrtana* Rāsa-sthalī, where through *saṅkīrtana* and dancing with His closest devotees, Lord Caitanya relished Rādhā-*bhāva* of *rāsa-līlā*. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura recognized the site of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha at Candraśekhara Bhavan as another form of Govardhana, and its adjoining Vrajapattana as Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa.[11]

Especially during preparations for and conducting Navadvīpa-dhāma Parikramā, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was able to determine the precise locations of many of the holy places mentioned in *Navadvīpa-dhāma-māhātmya* and *Navadvīpa-bhāva-taraṅga,* and he subsequently established Maṭhas at some of these loci. In October 1920, prior to the first full nine-day Navadvīpa-dhāma Parikramā organized by the Gauḍīya Maṭha, he led an expedition through difficult and unfamiliar paths to chart out the route, arrange for construction of shelters, and search for lost sites connected with Caitanya Mahāprabhu's activities and associates. One outstanding find was an ancient temple of Śrī Śrī Gaura-Gadādhara, established during the pastimes of Lord Caitanya by His devotee Vāṇīnātha Vipra. It was situated in the once populous Cāṅpāhāṭi—now surrounded by thick jungle. In the aftermath of a devastating plague that had struck a few years earlier, hundreds of former homes had become the overgrown abodes of snakes, scorpions, and jackals. Only two families remained, somehow eking out a living.

With help from them, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and his men negotiated a way through forbidding thickets, and after much effort eventually came upon a building so dilapidated that one side had completely collapsed. The door was locked, and upon prizing it open with the help of local residents, they peered through the semi-darkness therein and made out the unclothed, discolored, and soiled, yet still extraordinarily beautiful, deities of Śrī Śrī Gaura-Gadādhara. With overwhelming joy at having rediscovered Them, mixed with anguish for Their present plight, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī offered *daṇḍavat* and then lamented aloud at the state of that place where "with such love Vāṇīnātha Vipra served the lords of his life, the dust of whose feet the demigods, headed by Brahmā and Śiva, ever aspire to place on their heads." To the accompaniment of *kīrtana* he then circumambulated the temple with his followers by breaking the surrounding undergrowth.

But further grief arose upon coming across fish scales and broken clay cooking pots on the temple veranda. Questioning of the neighboring inhabitants revealed that one local family cooked and ate fish there, but also that some simalacrum of worship was still going on: a fish- and meat-eating *brāhmaṇa* from the nearby village of Māmgāchi would occasionally come according to his whim, offer a small quantity of puffed rice or flat-rice, have a picnic of flesh food, and then depart.

Pained at heart, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura vowed to serve Śrī Śrī Gaura-Gadādhara in a befitting manner and prayed to Them for that opportunity. Within a few months the right of worship, the temple itself, and the adjoining land were transferred to the Śrī Caitanya Maṭha. And by the time the Parikramā party visited on the following year, conditions had so wonderfully improved that hundreds of pilgrims were able to camp overnight and avail of full facilities for bathing and honoring *mahā-prasāda*.* Lecturing at Cāṅpāhāṭi during that Parikramā, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura flayed the so-called *brāhmaṇas* of the area for being proud of their material academic knowledge and university degrees, which had converted them into *śūdras,* and moreover for their total lack of interest in spiritual matters and therefore being unfit to be called Hindus or even human beings.

Upon discovering in a similarly lamentable state the sites connected with Śrī Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura and Śrī Sāraṅga Murāri in Māmgāchi, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī undertook to restitute and rebuild them also. Considering Vṛndāvana dāsa's monumental contribution to Vaiṣṇava literature and that even from the secular viewpoint he was the first great Bengali poet, hence the pioneer in establishing Bengali as a distinct literary medium, that his birthplace had been wholly abandoned and become covered by dense woodland demonstrated to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī the extent to which Bengalis were ignorant and negligent of the tremendous input by Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His devotees toward the esteemed cultural life of Bengal. He had the surroundings cleared and a temple built thereupon for Śrī Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura's original Śrī Gaura-Nityānanda deities, whom he brought back from being served elsewhere.

While one day going from Godruma to Nṛsiṁha-pallī (the site in Navadvīpa-*dhāma* of a Nṛsiṁha temple marking the place that Śrī Nṛsiṁha-deva visited in ancient times), Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura espied a particular tract of land and directed his disciples to contact the owner to procure it. At this request the proprietor became perplexed and told the devotees, "Please inform Mahārāja that I am honored to give this plot to him, but it is wild jungle with tigers and jackals and no one dares go there. Better I give him some other, cultivated land." Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura insisted that he wanted that spot only, and after securing it he sent disciples to search the place. Upon returning they reported having seen carved stones and raised areas where high walls had once stood, and a large effulgent cobra with a glowing jewel on its head protecting the ruins of a huge building. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura then revealed that this was once the palace of King Suvarṇa Sena, from the time of Satya-yuga. At that site he eventually established the Suvarṇa Vihāra Gauḍīya Maṭha.

Other important sites within Navadvīpa-*dhāma* whose locations Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī ascertained were the houses of Kholāvecā Śrīdhara and Murāri Gupta, where he later established temples, and Jayadeva Gosvāmī's *bhajana-kuṭīra.* He also restored Chand Kazi's *samādhi* and inaugurated several projects to provide facilities in farflung parts of the *dhāma* for pilgrims performing *parikramā*.*

Vraja-maṇḍala

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī served Mathurā-Vṛndāvana–dhāma by therein establishing three Gauḍīya Maṭhas, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *puṣpa-samādhi,* accepting administrative responsibility for the ancient Saṅket Bihārī Maṭha, and in 1932 leading a grand Vraja-maṇḍala Parikramā.

Accompanied by many followers, in 1934 he undertook Ūrja-*vrata* in Mathurā, during which he rediscovered the place where Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī had received *darśana* of the Gopāla deity.[12] The next year, while observing Ūrja-*vrata* at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, he revealed service to deities at the Kuñja Bihārī Maṭha there, established Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *puṣpa-samādhi* at Vraja Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja, and inaugurated the Śrī Vraja-dhāma-pracāriṇī Sabhā (for coordinating the building and overseeing of several projects in the Vraja area and to propagate the true conception of service to Vraja-*dhāma*), while also performing extensive *bhajana,* including daily circumambulation of Rādhā-kuṇḍa.[*]

Toward the end of his sojourn in this world Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī stated, "Considerable work has been done in Bengal and Orissa and a start has been made in London, but much is pending in Vraja." He expressed his desire to develop a temple for Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, and therefrom preach authentic *bhakti* as distinguished from the diverse distorted forms then prevalent in Vraja-*maṇḍala.*

Two of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's disciples were natives of Vraja-*maṇḍala,* one being from Varṣāṇā, the site of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's residence, and the other from Rādhā-kuṇḍa.[13]

To explain to his retinue the transcendental glories and features of the *dhāma* and to cultivate his own natural Vraja-*bhakti,* when he was in Vraja-*maṇḍala* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī often spoke on *prayojana-tattva* and had *kīrtanas* sung describing such topics.

Parikramās

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī considered walking tours of the *dhāmas* beneficial both for advanced devotees, who could contemplate the Lord's pastimes in the very locale where they had been performed, and for neophytes, who could rapidly progress by associating with such elevated Vaiṣṇavas in these most worshipable places within the entire creation. He pointed out that such *parikramās* afford participants an opportunity to engage simultaneously in all five of the principal practices of *sādhana-bhakti:* associating with devotees, chanting the holy names, hearing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* living in the *dhāma,* and worshiping the deity. By arranging to bring many devotees together in *parikramā,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī also created a new method of mass preaching, both to direct partakers and to local villagers, who would also hear from or receive *prasāda* from the Gauḍīya Maṭha devotees, or at least be impressed by the proceedings. And many others would learn of it from newspapers and by word of mouth.

Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu had been the first to perform *parikramā* of Navadvīpa-*dhāma,* taking along young Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī. Subsequently other great Gauḍīyas, notably Śrī Śrīnivāsa Ācārya and Śrī Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, also undertook this pilgrimage. More recently, inconspicuously and only once, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had similarly completed it while researching the *dhāma.* But on the whole, the practice of circumambulating Navadvīpa had become almost wholly forgotten until Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī revived it in an unprecedented and magnificent manner. He wrote to a disciple:

> Perform *parikramā* of Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa with five thousand devotees and one hundred *mṛdaṅgas.* Take part in this circumambulation with all your devoted religious friends and relatives. Do not neglect to gather together as many *mṛdaṅgas, karatālas, rāmaśiṁhās,* pennants, and devotees as you can.[*] For this festival of Hari, bring as much money and necessary items as you are able to obtain from the noble-hearted and generous people there.[14]

The first of these annual Navadvīpa-dhāma Parikramās, in 1920, lasted only four days. Subsequent Parikramās were for nine days, one day for each petal of the spiritually conceived lotus of Navadvīpa-*dhāma,* each corresponding to one of the nine main processes of *bhakti.* Numerous pilgrims from all over Bengal and other provinces joined in, with the number of participants increasing each year. From 1921 onward, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura personally led the parade and expected all his disciples to accompany him. The purpose was not to gawk at holy places in the manner of tourists, but to perform mass *saṅkīrtana,* and most importantly, hear the message of Godhead from the authentic representatives of Godhead. En route, *kīrtanas* relevant to the sites being visited were sung, and at each stop descriptions and the relevance of pastimes performed there by Lord Kṛṣṇa or Lord Caitanya and Their associates were narrated by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his sannyasi disciples. During the evenings, programs of *kīrtana* and lectures were attended by Parikramā participants and local inhabitants.

In 1932, two consecutive issues of the *Harmonist* ran, the articles “Circumambulation of the

Divine Realm of Vraja" and "Circumambulation of Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma" respectively, each explaining the proper attitude for undertaking *parikramā* of the *dhāmas* and stressing the importance of visiting the *dhāma* with an advanced devotee and constantly hearing from him.*

In September 1933, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura took a party of devotees on a tour throughout Navadvīpa-*dhāma,* coursing the waterways on two motor launches called Līlā and Suradhunī.†

After its inauguration, circumambulation of Navadvīpa was conducted annually by the Gauḍīya Maṭha; but the Vraja-maṇḍala Parikramā occurred only once—from 9 October to 11 November 1932. As they had done for the Navadvīpa-dhāma Parikramā, devotees worked hard to make the multiple preparations necessary for Vraja-maṇḍala Parikramā, such as arranging to transport raw food, basic medical supplies, fuel for cooking in remote areas, and so on.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī led the group of pilgrims on the 168-mile route. Although such devotional expeditions were regularly conducted by other sects, particularly the Vallabha *sampradāya*, the Gauḍīya Maṭha Parikramā was one of the biggest ever seen in Vṛndāvana.‡ Everything was done in a grand way. The devotees walked in procession headed by the deity of Lord Caitanya carried atop an elephant named Kīrtana dāsa, accompanied by a caparisoned horse and a police band. Along the way, six camels were purchased to help carry loads. Also present were two of the Gauḍīya Maṭha cars, sent from Calcutta by train. As they walked, numerous pilgrims carried flags and all chanted in *kīrtana*. For the convenience of pilgrims from different provinces, lectures and guidance were given in various languages.

Each evening a small township of almost a hundred large tents was arranged in a semicircle, within which, each group of pilgrims was assigned to a specific section for the night. In the center were tents for the deity, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, his sannyasis, and other leading devotees. Evening halts were not merely for resting, but for *kīrtana,* Hari-*kathā,* cooking, and finally honoring of *mahā-prasāda.* Certain wealthy devotees sponsored feasts on different days. Dozens of gaslights and campfires made a pretty scene, yet pragmatism demanded that even in this superlatively sacred place, guards be posted to stave off the dacoits known to infest the locality.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura made concessions for the several participants on the Parikramā who were not committed devotees. For instance, although it is enjoined that *parikramā* be performed barefoot, because the paths of Vraja-*maṇḍala* were full of thorns Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura allowed the use of rubber-bottomed canvas shoes. And tea-drinking was permitted for those thus habituated. Yet he forbad participants from taking fruit or flowers from the trees, or twigs to be used as toothbrushes, explaining, "Everything in Vraja is meant for Kṛṣṇa's enjoyment. The trees are *ṛṣis* and *munis.* Do not disturb them." He reprimanded some *brahmacārīs* after being informed that they had broken off twigs at Rāsa-sthalī to use as toothbrushes.*

Each day Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had one of the noted *kīrtanīyās* among his disciples lead Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's song beginning *rādhā-kuṇḍa-taṭa kuñja-kuṭīra,* which lists diverse sights and sensations of Vṛndāvana that are *uddīpanas* for love of Kṛṣṇa. And

throughout each day he profusely distributed Hari-*kathā,* often speaking in his unique manner on *prayojana-tattva.* For example:

> Śrī Caitanya appeared to show how Śrī Rādhikā worships Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Rādhikā does not come to this world as an instructor, for people would not understand that. Daft persons adjudge Rādhā as a coquettish woman who abandoned her husband Abhimanyu to serve Kṛṣṇa. But any entity or any male other than Kṛṣṇa is not worthy to be called husband. To consider anyone else male or husband is but a twisted and imitative attempt to be Kṛṣṇa. This conception was imparted to the *jīvas* of this world by Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, acting as the ideal sadhu. Some persons, not seeing or comprehending Him as Kṛṣṇa, cannot realize His position. There cannot be auspiciousness for those who verbally accept Kṛṣṇa yet refuse to follow Śrī Vārṣabhānavī. Another category of fools is the deviant so-called Gauḍīyas. Without being fully devoted to Gaurāṅga, no one can know Kṛṣṇa.[15]

During the Parikramā, early one morning in Mathurā Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura started speaking to his disciples, beginning by telling them of a saying of his *gurudeva's* that even now rang in his ears: "Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is *kāṅgālinīra ṭhākurāṇī* (the mistress of the poor)." He further explained that Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is Herself the embodiment of guileless freedom from any desire other than to serve Kṛṣṇa and can be attained only by persons possessed of the same selflessness; anyone who thinks himself the owner of anything cannot have Rādhā.

After delivering this impromptu Hari-*kathā,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī suddenly said, "Now Kṛṣṇa is taking the cows to the forest. So come—we'll also go!" Accompanied by a group of devotees, he set off for Vṛndāvana, first visiting the Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Maṭha he had established there. In the house of a Bengali doctor, he delivered Hari-*kathā* to a large group of educated visitors, specifically replying to questions and propositions put by Śrī Satya Caraṇa Guha, a retired attorney from Calcutta residing in Vṛndāvana. Satya Babu suggested that it would be highly beneficial to the Vaiṣṇava world if Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī were to rectify those Vṛndāvana *bābājīs* who though lacking legitimate spiritual aspirations duplicitously presented themselves as great devotees. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī replied that all Vaiṣṇavas were his gurus and he did not have the wicked disposition to think of correcting them. One merely posing as a Vaiṣṇava may be incorrigible, yet straightforward and fearless delineation of the difference between actual Vaiṣṇavas and imitators was required for benefitting genuine truth-seekers and the ignorant public. Those who deem cheaters as sadhus and Vaiṣṇavas also become implicated in *asat-saṅga.*

Satya Babu then related how upon seeing the behavior of so many *bābājīs,* he was unable to develop faith in them. To consider them saintly would be sinful, and it would be further sinful if with such attitude he were to make a show of offering them *daṇḍavat* and respect. He said that when he intimated these same feelings to Rāmakṛṣṇa dāsa Bābājī, he was cautioned of his inability to even slightly practice the austerities of the *bābājīs,* who furthermore had resided in Vraja much longer than he.[*] Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura responded by pointing out how *asuras* like Agha, Baka, and Pūtanā had also lived in Vraja, and rhetorically asked if such association is

favorable for Kṛṣṇa-*bhajana*. After enlightening the listeners on several apposite topics, and receiving fully prostrated *daṇḍavat* from a highly appreciative Satya Babu, at midday Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his party departed for Mathurā.[16]

When approaching Govardhana Hill, participants were warned not to take any *śilās* from there. Then while they were circumambulating, sudden violent wind and rain threw the pilgrims into chaos. The accompanying *pāṇḍā* declared that someone must have made a serious mistake, and thus Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura asked if anyone had picked up a *śilā*. A member of the group admitted to having done so, and then replaced the *śilā,* after which the storm immediately ceased.

While on Vraja-maṇḍala Parikramā, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura discovered on the bank of Sūrya-kuṇḍa the *samādhis* of Śrī Bhāgavata dāsa Gosvāmī and his *gurudeva* Śrī Madhusūdana dāsa Gosvāmī, and on the banks of Śrī-kuṇḍa (Surabhi-kuṇḍa) in Kāmyavana, the *bhajana-sthalī* of Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī.[17] †

At Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī lectured before an audience of five hundred. The adjacent rooftops were packed with people straining to hear, and in the crowd below there was no space even for standing. At one point in this lecture he began speaking animatedly on Rādhā-*tattva,* then suddenly stopped—silent—overwhelmed with ecstasy. After about ten minutes his emotions subsided and he continued speaking.* During this visit, the Gauḍīya Maṭha party fed almost 250 Vaiṣṇavas with delicacies like *laḍḍu, peḍā,* and *kacaurīs* brought from the town of Vṛndāvana in two cars. And Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī expressed a desire to construct a major Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple there, with eight temples for the *aṣṭa-sakhīs,* the eight principal *gopī* assistants of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

As had their counterparts in Navadvīpa, the caste Goswamis of Vraja opposed the Gauḍīya Maṭha Parikramā, and for much the same reason, to protest Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's awarding of brahminical status to those not born in *brāhmaṇa* families. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had revived this system in accordance with the teachings of *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* compiled by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, a founding father of the modern town of Vṛndāvana. But descendants of original followers of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī now stood in opposition to principles he had sought to establish.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura held a meeting with *paṇḍitas* from the caste Goswami camp, after which they seemed pacified. Yet when the pilgrims came to the seven main temples of Vṛndāvana, they found the doors of all except Śrī Rādha-ramaṇa shut on them. Local shops were also closed to them, and profuse invectives, along with a few stones, were hurled at them. At the Rādhā-ramaṇa temple, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura remarked that by this *darśana* alone he was having *darśana* of all the deities of Vṛndāvana. Nevertheless, not wanting that their guru be insulted, Śrīmat Śrīdhara Mahārāja, Śrīmat Śrauti Mahārāja, Śrī Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī, and Śrī Hayagrīva Brahmacārī, all from respectable *brāhmaṇa* families, went to meet the temple proprietors one by one. They proposed, "Our dynasties are esteemed even by your families, and by behavior and learning we are maintaining the highest standard of brahminical

culture; and we have accepted Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura as our guru. He is certainly the best of *brāhmaṇas.* If we recognize him as such, why can't you?" After two or three temple owners had thus been convinced, the others similarly relented and opened their gates.[18]

The *Gauḍīya* noted that since 1880, when *Amrita Bazar Patrika* had reported looting and killing of Bengali pilgrims in Vraja, Bengalis had been afraid to venture there, but now after so many years, as news spread of the Gauḍīya Maṭha's successful Vraja-maṇḍala Parikramā, Bengalis were again becoming confident to visit Vraja.[19]

Māyāpur Pastimes

It was the day before Janmāṣṭamī, circa 1905. Māyāpur was flooded and accessible only by boat. Residing at Vrajapattana, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī continued to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* day and night, yet was feeling dissatisfied that he had not been able to obtain milk for offering to the deity of Lord Caitanya at the Yogapīṭha. Then he rebuked himself: "Have I thought like this because tomorrow there will be *nirjala-vrata*? If so, it was very wrong of me." That afternoon, somehow wading through puddles and slush, a milkman arrived with large quantities of milk, condensed milk, butter, and other dairy products sent by a zamindar named Harinātha Cakravartī.

After offering everything to the deities, the *pūjārī* at the Yogapīṭha brought the *mahā-prasāda* to Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī at Vrajapattana despite Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's order that sumptuous dishes offered to Mahāprabhu not be given to him. After the devotees explained what had happened, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī went to the Yogapīṭha and apologized to Śrīman Mahāprabhu: "You inspired someone to send these items just to fulfil my desire. I am sorry to have put You to so much trouble. Why did I have such an unnecessary thought?"

As Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's preaching movement gradually swelled, the once seldom-visited Śrī Caitanya Maṭha became a bustling outpost. Accordingly, to get the peacefulness he required for writing, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī started to sojourn more often at the Ekāyana Maṭha in Hanskhali (Haṁsa-*kṣetra*), a serene spot on the river Chuni, about thirty miles from Māyāpur. He ascribed much importance to Hanskhali, perceiving that in Satya-yuga it had been inhabited by *haṁsas* (elevated transcendental personages) and was worshipable by pure Vaiṣṇavas for cultivating the *paramahaṁsa-dharma* of accepting only the essence of spiritual knowledge. He desired that a great library be established there. To bring their guru back to where his disciples needed him and simultaneously to facilitate his writing, Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu had Bhakti Vijaya Bhavan built at the southern entrance of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha. Submitting to Kuñja Bihārī's will, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī shifted there, and commented:

> While I desired to scrupulously avoid opulence and crowds, considering that those may go against my principle of humility, which prompted me to be like a blade of grass, and also go against my perserverance, which rooted me in perpetual Hari-*bhajana,* I changed my residence to Hanskhali, the loneliest possible place. But my most affectionate Kuñja Bihārī deeply felt that both purposes of my life should be served, namely that my constant presence in the *dhāma* be secured and simultaneously my solitude remain undisturbed. Hence he got this building constructed for me by the munificence of Śrī Bhakti Vijaya, so here I stay as the Garuḍa-*stambha* of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha.[20]

He further stated:

> As Prahlāda Mahārāja represents the Garuḍa-*stambha* of Narasiṁha and initiates the

world to His service, and as Āñjaneya (Hanumān) represents the Garuḍa-*stambha* of Rāmacandra and proclaims to the world the ideal of service to the Lord, so too, representing the Garuḍa-*stambha* of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, I am sheltered herein at Bhakti Vijaya Bhavan near the lion gate of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha.[21]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura often remained alone in his room at Bhakti Vijaya Bhavan for hours on end—chanting, studying, and writing. When he eventually egressed, his disciples would quickly congregate, eager for his association. Sometimes he would call for the neighboring village children (mostly Muslims) to give them sweets. And often he sat on the roof terrace, which afforded a vista of the Yogapīṭha spire towering over the trees and fields, with the Gaṅgā rushing in the background.

Early one morning outside Bhakti Vijaya Bhavan, several pilgrims had gathered by the drainpipe and were jubilantly sprinkling Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's bathwater on their heads. But when he saw that, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was not at all happy. From then on he bathed only in a tub, and ordered his disciples to throw the wash water at a distance and that no one should take his bath water.

One day while walking from Śrī Caitanya Maṭha to the Yogapīṭha, a disciple accompanying Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura covered his nose with the edge of his dhoti to protect against the reek of slops.[*] Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura smiled and commented, "This is a transcendental land full of absolutely pure, spiritual scents, yet you detect only the malodors of this material world. This divine realm is nondifferent from the Supreme Lord. Don't try to comprehend it by mundane intelligence."

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī said that devotees residing at the Yogapīṭha should be duly initiated *brāhmaṇas* adept in *śruti* and that the Yogapīṭha was not for nondevotee *strī-śūdra-dvijabandhus,* who were ineligible both for residence at a place of worship and for study of the Vedas.[22][†] And he would say that Śrī Gauracandra, the golden moon of Śrī Māyāpur, is eternally performing His pastime of *saṅkīrtana* with His eternal associates in His eternal abode Śrīdhāma Māyāpur. As stated in *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata:*

adyāpiha caitanya ei saba līlā kare
yāṅ'ra bhāgye thāke, se dekhaye nirantare

Even now Lord Caitanya performs His pastimes. Those who are fortunate see them constantly. (Cb 2.23.513)

Once Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura came out from Bhakti Vijaya Bhavan at around two in the morning, calling, "Everyone, look! See over there! Gaurāṅga and Nitāi are going on *saṅkīrtana*! Follow Them! Follow Them! Come and see!" All the devotees rushed out—but none could see Them.

Another time in the middle of the night, Śrīmat Tīrtha Mahārāja roused the devotees: "Get up!

Look at what is going on!" Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī also awoke and said, "Just see! The Pañca-tattva are going by, chanting and performing *saṅkīrtana*! Come, let's follow Them!" The devotees accompanied their guru out into the darkness, but only Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and Śrīmat Tīrtha Mahārāja could see Them. Such incidents were not uncommon in the pastimes of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, especially in Navadvīpa-*dhāma.*

One time at Bhakti Vijaya Bhavan around midnight a sound woke Sevā-vilāsa Brahmacārī. He arose and beheld Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura striding toward the south, absorbed in thought. Seeing him going alone in the deep night, Sevā-vilāsa Prabhu thought it wise to follow. Reaching the Yogapīṭha Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura prostrated in respect, and after proceeding a little farther south he repeatedly cried "Hā Śacīnandana Gaurahari!" and again made *daṇḍavat.*[*] Soon tumultuous *kīrtana* became audible, and many devotees approached, sounding *mṛdaṅgas, karatālas,* conchs, and gongs. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura offered *daṇḍavat* to them. They reciprocally offered *daṇḍavat* and then said, "Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, today we are graced with *darśana* of the lotus feet of you who are an eternal associate of Lord Caitanya and a most dear *mañjarī* of Rādhā. Glance mercifully upon and favor the lowly fallen souls. By your mercy, that of Śrī Gaurasundara and His *dhāma* is attained." In humility-laden tones Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura replied, "You are all Vaiṣṇavas of Śvetadvīpa, eternal Gaura-*dhāma-vāsīs* and servants of Lord Caitanya. Our only desire is to attain your mercy."[†]

Those divine beings offered prayers to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and then resumed *kīrtana.* They offered *daṇḍavat* before the Yogapīṭha, plaintively crying, "*Hā* Śacīnandana! *Hā* Gaurahari! Please reveal Your *dhāma* and form. *Hā* Śacīdevī! *Hā* Jagannātha Miśra! Mercifully bestow upon us service to Śrī Gaurahari." After circumambulating the Yogapīṭha temple four times while performing *kīrtana,* they rolled in the dust of the adjacent forecourt of Śacīdevī. Then they seated Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura before them and, with palms joined in respect, said, "Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura! You are Śrī Gaurahari's dearest servant, the fulfiller of his *mano-'bhīṣṭa.* Having heard of your qualities from Lord Caitanya's topmost associates, we came for *darśana* of your lotus feet and to hear from you the pastimes enacted by Lord Gaura on this earthly plane. Kindly fulfil our entreaty." After begging their blessing to recite, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura discoursed on Gaura-*līlā-kathā* as described in authoritative biographies, enriched with his own unique realizations and siddhāntic explanations of its intricacies, nonstop until the chirping of the birds of the *dhāma* announced the coming aurora. Before parting, the residents of Śvetadvīpa requested Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to speak Gaura-*līlā-kathā* to them every night. Then he and they offered mutual *daṇḍavat* and returned to their respective abodes.[23]

Dealings with Muslims

The difficulties of living at Māyāpur were compounded by a preponderance of illiterate Muslim villagers, most of whom were queazy about what they perceived as a Hindu pilgrimage site arising in their ancestral home (and indeed toward anything Hindu), thus needing little provoking to become openly hostile. Taking advantage of the charged and unruly political atmosphere, certain self-interested persons, who opposed the declaration of Śrī Māyāpur as the

appearance place of Lord Caitanya, conspired to incite local Muslims against Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī when he first accepted stewardship of the Yogapīṭha. Although Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī had no malintent toward or designs on the Muslims, they became inflamed when fed rumors by the conspirators, who almost succeeded in occasioning a riot, and went as far as attempting to send Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's chief assistant to the gallows.[*] For some time severe disturbances were caused by rabble-rousers, but gradually some truth-seeking Muslims who had faith in Mahāprabhu came to understand the whole situation, and sanity prevailed.

Thereafter Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī established genial relationships with the Muslim villagers, who reciprocally held him in high regard, the Muslim landholders often visiting him. Rather than contemn Muslims, as was the wont of many Hindus, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī respected them as *dhāma-vāsīs*. He especially esteemed the descendants of Chand Kazi, who by Lord Caitanya's blessings were somewhat inclined toward Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti.*[24] And several Muslims from Māyāpur and other parts of Navadvīpa-*dhāma,* although not formally initiated, considered themselves disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.

But dealings with neighboring Muslims were not always smooth. The Śrī Caitanya Maṭha ran the Thakur Bhakti Vinode Institute in Māyāpur, and most of the students were from neighboring Muslim villages. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had introduced that holidays be on Ekādaśī, rather than Sunday, and that Pañcamī be fully dedicated to spiritual pursuits.[†] When the Muslim community petitioned that the holiday be changed to Friday, their day of prayer, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura entrusted the matter to Vinoda Bihārī Brahmacārī. An educational inspector came to see Vinoda Prabhu, who showed him on the calendar some Ekādaśīs that fell on Friday and said, "Actually, *ekādaśī* means Friday. It is just that we are Hindus and they are Muslims, so we have our way of saying and they have theirs." In this way he tricked the inspector, and the holiday continued to be on Ekādaśī. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura approved of Vinoda Prabhu's action, calling him "a cunning fellow."

After winning a court case to recoup land from occupying Muslims, devotees pursued it further to try to get the intruders jailed. But Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura disapproved, saying that it was not neccesary to retaliate so harshly as to cause harm to others.

When Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī gave *harināma* to a Muslim devotee named Kālacānda from nearby Māyāpur village, some local gossipers prattled, "Oh, he will not become purified."[*] Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī then narrated a parable: upon hearing that a Muslim villager had been appointed as a judge, some Hindus attempted to downplay his achievement by scoffing that he could not possibly be getting a salary. Bearing a flag, Kālacānda led the Navadvīpa-dhāma Parikramā. Eventually his whole family became Vaiṣṇavas while remaining at home, and his neighbors never troubled them for having accepted Vaiṣṇava dharma.

Once Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura left Śrī Caitanya Maṭha and walked alone and barefoot toward Ballāl Dīghi, although generally he never went anywhere alone or barefoot.[†] Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu saw this and sent Cidghanānanda to follow with their spiritual master's shoes and an umbrella.[‡] Vāsudeva Prabhu told Cidghanānanda, "The guru is the direct manifestation of

Godhead and should be served as such." Cidghanānanda caught up with his spiritual master, but being just a young boy, he was too short to properly hold the umbrella over his *gurudeva's* head. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura proceeded to the home of a Muslim who had deep faith in him and had donated some land to Śrī Caitanya Maṭha. He was now sick and had requested through his son that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura place his lotus feet in their home and bless the entire household. Upon Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's arrival, he was received respectfully and offered a chair to sit in, over which Cidghanānanda placed his own *cādar* as a gesture of honor for his guru. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura inquired about the health and welfare of the family, and how their crops and gardens were faring. Having thus pleased them, he departed.

Pastimes in Puruṣottama-kṣetra

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī much loved and frequented Śrī Puruṣottama-*kṣetra* as the place where the Supreme Lord in His most munificent avatar as Lord Caitanya had remained to relish His most confidential mood—that of Rādhā in separation from Kṛṣṇa. To savor those pastimes through service to the Lord, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī established the Puruṣottama Maṭha in Purī—first in 1922 at Bhakti-kuṭī by installing a deity of Śrī Caitanya there, and later at Caṭaka Parvata, about a quarter mile along the seashore from Bhakti-kuṭī. Caṭaka Parvata is a generic name for the dunes on the beach in Purī, which Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu would take to be Govardhana.[25] Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī relocated Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha on the side of a particular sand mound, within a hundred yards of the temple of Ṭoṭā-gopīnātha, who formerly had been served by Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita, a direct expansion of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Thereafter the hill that Puruṣottama Maṭha adorned was specifically referred to by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and his disciples as Caṭaka Parvata, which thus became an alternative designation for the Puruṣottama Maṭha itself.

However, at first many persons objected to the new site, for the land was so jagged and overlain with thorn bushes that no creature could enter therein. But Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would reply, "This place is nondifferent from Govardhana. The *dhāma* has covered it with thorns to protect it from being misused by sensualists who would have simply amassed offenses by arrogating it to enjoy pleasant sea breezes. But upon our coming to serve the Lord, the *dhāma* will make all arrangements and provide all facilities."

Indeed, those devotees who returned a year later found that all the thorn bushes were gone. With considerable difficulty, the boundary was delimited and construction begun. Then only twenty days before the commencement date of the annual Vyāsa-*pūjā,* it was announced that the venue would be Caṭaka Parvata. By Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's mercy, somehow the plot was cleared and much of it leveled, and preparations were made for a glorious festival.

The next year a residence for Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, known as Caṭaka-*kuṭīra,* was built in fifteen days. Every afternoon after honoring *prasāda,* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura ascended the sand mound beside this *bhajana-kuṭīra* and from there viewed the location of the new temple and gave various ideas for its design.

One day Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī ordered Sevā-vilāsa Brahmacārī to clean and mark out the temple site.[*] In so doing Sevā-vilāsa Prabhu slightly lowered the land by digging and scything, for which he was scolded by his *gurudeva,* "It should be raised higher, but you have made it lower." Yet he became pacified when Sevā-vilāsa Prabhu explained that he had done so to facilitate making the foundation and measurements. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī then expressed his vision for the upcoming structure:

> The highest temple should be for Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Its spire should be visible from a long distance so that people will think of and remember Her. There should also be an

> arrangement whereby Her servants can very enthusiastically preach Her words throughout the planet. Already residing in Purī are Madana-mohana, the presiding deity of *sambandha-jñāna,* and Gopīnātha, the presiding deity of *prayojana-tattva.* Now the presiding deity of *abhidheya,* Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda, should be installed here in the highest temple, which should be beautiful in all respects.†

In this manner Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī daily made new plans for the development of the temple and worship of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda therein. And from such musings his disciples could catch glimmers of his profound desire to serve the potentates of his life.

One day while sitting on the sand hill Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura mused, "When the associates of Mahāprabhu visited Purī, they were accommodated in this vicinity and traversed these pathways. Therefore this area is still known as Gauḍa Bāṭasāhi.‡ These are our places. Not knowing this, others have erected residential facilities here in a spirit of worldly enjoyment. We should gradually salvage these sites by purchasing them." Another time, while discussing the establishment of Rādhārāṇī's temple, he noted, "Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa is situated close to Govardhana. We have come here to constantly remember and gain inspiration from that *kuṇḍa.*" And he explained:

> Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself declares that worship of His devotees is more important than worship of Himself.* Therefore it is essential that the temple of the *āśraya-vigraha* be higher than that of the *viṣaya-vigraha*—which is why the temple of the *ācāryas* Vyāsadeva and Madhva is above that of Śrī Śrī Gaura-Gadādhara. The Mādhva *sampradāya* considers Śrīla Vyāsadeva as *viṣaya-vigraha,* yet we Mādhva-Gauḍīyas accept him as *āśraya-vigraha.* The temple of the original *āśraya-vigraha,* Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, should be constructed highest of all, upon Caṭaka Parvata. She should reside there with Her associates. Śrī Govinda will be obliged to go there along with His associates and remain simply to serve Her. One with a spontaneous service mood can even climb on the shoulder of his master if required for better serving him, for such a servant has no motive for personal sense enjoyment but lives only to serve his beloved. There is no spiritual benefit in ascending hills to enjoy breezes, nor in any other sense gratification, nor in sense abnegation as in Jainism. Although out of respect Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas do not place their feet on the original Govardhana, for the sake of serving our *ācāryas* we may ascend Caṭaka Parvata, the nondifferent replica of Govardhana manifest here in Purī.

For some days at Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī elaborately extolled the glories of Śrīla Gadādhara Paṇḍita, describing how in Purī he had recited the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to Lord Caitanya and His associates, and declaring, "We are in the shelter of Śrīla Gadādhara Paṇḍita. Hence a Bhāgavata Āsana or Bhāgavata Khaṇḍa should be established at Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha for continuous recitation and hearing of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.* For this reason the devotees' residential quarters are being built on land facing Bodhāyana-kuṭīra. Now let such hearing and chanting of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* begin." He also said, "In front of Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha is a large garden wherein fruit, flowers, and vegetables are produced in

service to Hari-guru-Vaiṣṇavas. Śrī Jadumaṇi labors tirelessly here. This garden should be named Ānanda-bāga, for just by seeing it the pleasure of devotees increases, or Jadumaṇi-bāga, because here Jadumaṇi expresses his love for Śrī Hari."[*]

On another day he observed:

> After the departure of Mahāprabhu and His associates, two great misunderstandings caused havoc in the dissemination of His movement in Orissa: that His teachings had caused emasculation of the royal family of Orissa, leading to their subsequent kowtowing to Muslim invaders, and also the comments of some scholars and professors who subscribed to the judgment of opulence, which simply indicated their deep ignorance of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's mode of sweet service as topmost.[†] Yet exactly as a devastating storm is followed by calm, eventually Orissa will be relieved by the soothing moon of Lord Caitanya when His instructions are again preached in an authorized manner. In accordance with the utterance *utkale puruṣottamāt,* not only Orissa but the whole world will be blessed with the teachings and sweetness of Puruṣottama Śrī Kṛṣṇa.[‡]

When staying at Purī, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura frequently went in *saṅkīrtana* procession for *darśana* of Ṭoṭā-gopīnātha, with the devotees singing Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's "Vijñapti," an earnest supplication to Gopīnātha. "Gopīnātha is our most beloved deity," Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would say, and he would instruct the devotees of Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha to regularly bring, but especially on Ekādaśī and festival days, to Ṭoṭā-gopīnātha (and also to Rādhā-Kānta Maṭha, Mahāprabhu's residence in Purī) a plate or basket with items such as uncooked rice and dal, ghee, vegetables, and flowers, and a donation of around ten rupees.

After having accepted *sannyāsa,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī usually attended Ratha-yātrā in Purī, and many disciples would join him. Following the example of Mahāprabhu, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would decamp to Ālālanātha during the fifteen-day period termed *anavasara* (when Lord Jagannātha enacts the pastime of becoming sick and is not available for public *darśana*), which ends on the day before Ratha-yātrā. At the time of *anavasara* they would walk the fourteen miles to and from Ālālanātha continuously performing *kīrtana.*

Also as Mahāprabhu had done, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would lead his followers in cleaning the Guṇḍicā temple. On the day of Guṇḍicā-mārjana in 1934, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura cited from *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa, rathe ca vāmanaṁ dṛṣṭvā punar janma na vidyate* (One who sees the Lord on His chariot is not reborn), and then explained that the desire for *mokṣa* was not the Gauḍīyas' motive in attending Ratha-yātrā; their connection with Lord Jagannātha is solely through selfless service, and their intention is to take Him to Guṇḍicā, which is synonymous with their hearts, and keep Him there to serve Him in the best possible manner.[26] And one year at Balagaṇḍi, where Jagannātha halts before proceeding to Guṇḍicā, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura told his assembled followers that only devotees are qualified to pull the rope of Jagannātha's chariot; nondevotees who desire liberation by thus participating should not pull it.[27*]

Whenever Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura departed from Purī, usually to go to Calcutta, he would recite a refrain by Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, *nija-nikaṭa-nivāsaṁ dehi govardhana tvam,*[†] expressing hankering to reside near Govardhana, and indicating his own imminent separation from Govardhana manifested in Purī as Caṭaka Parvata.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had gained a reputation for being ghost-proof, for wherever he went, malefic spirits could not remain. He and his disciples had several times rented cheaply, or purchased at a bargain rate, buildings deemed uninhabitable due to infestation by spirits, and in each case his personal influence and *kīrtana* had driven out all inauspicious elements. The zamindar Śrī Nafar-candra Pal Chaudhuri owned a house in Purī so terrorized by a fierce *brahma-rākṣasa* that at night people were afraid to go near it.[‡] After Śrīla Bhaktivinoda's disappearance, Nafar Babu locked the building and used it only for a fortnight each year at the time of Ratha-yātrā. He had tried to rent the property, but even brave persons who attempted to stay there would inevitably quickly vacate. When Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī once came to Purī, Nafar Babu petitioned him, "If you grace my house with the dust of your lotus feet, surely the ghost will leave."

Followed by his associates, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura went there, sat down, and began lecturing on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. After the recitation was finished, before everyone's eyes a clay jug full of water manifested in the air, dropped to the ground, and shattered in front of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. As soon as the water touched his feet there was a boom and the ghostly presence immediately departed. The spirit had entered the water to touch Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's lotus feet, and upon doing so he was redeemed from his offenses and freed from disembodied existence. Formerly he had been a reclusive *bābājī* who often blasphemed pure devotees, and thus was forced to undergo such horrible punishment.[*]

One time upon seeing a *naḷiā* at the seashore, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī commented, "We are *naḷiās.* The ocean of material existence is much greater than the sea we are now perceiving. *Naḷiās* rescue persons drowning in the sea, whereas we pull people out of the ocean of material suffering."[†]

One day while bathing in the sea, Śrī Kīrtanānanda Brahmacārī was carried out by strong waves but was saved by a *naḷiā.* On returning to Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha he related the incident to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, who responded gravely, "You are in the *bhava-sāgara.* If you are sincere, then just as the *naḷiā* has saved you today, *śrī-gurudeva* will deliver you from the flux and reflux of worldly life." He then asked, "Why did you go to bathe in the sea? Why waste time?" Kīrtanānanda replied, "Well, that's why we come to Purī, for bathing in the sea." Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī said, "That is another kind of personal enjoyment. Just being in Purī-*dhāma* is sufficient. The sea at Purī is certainly a *mahā-tīrtha,* but bathing in it is not necessary. You can honor it simply by sprinkling some water on your head."

And he wrote sardonically:

> Today on the occasion of a solar eclipse two of our devotees dipped in the ocean and

earned *puṇya*! But unlike them we were deprived of earning such piety! Today all the rivers are present in the sea and there is a solar eclipse—yet we are lazy.[28]

Ālālanātha

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī revealed that Purī is *vipralambha-kṣetra,* the place where Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu came to savor the most elevated loving feelings of separation from Kṛṣṇa, yet Ālālanātha is *dvi-guṇita vipralambha-kṣetra* (the place of doubled separation), for Caitanya Mahāprabhu would go there during *anavasara,* when He could not see Lord Jagannātha in Purī.[29 *]

In the temple at Ālālanātha, Lord Caitanya's *viraha-bhāva* once became so intense that upon His offering *daṇḍavat* to the deity, the stone floor melted and left a permanent imprint of His entire body. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura experienced similar rhapsody when visiting Ālālanātha in 1918: Perceiving the adjoining forest as Vṛndāvana, he wandered into it, enraptured. Upon seeing a red fruit on a creeper, remembrance of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's red-lac-dyed lotus feet gripped his heart, and becoming overwhelmed he strayed deep into the woods; upon returning to external consciousness, he had no idea where he was, until eventually found by his disciples, who were worriedly searching for him.

In 1926, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura established the Śrī Brahma Gauḍīya Maṭha adjacent to the northern corner of the Ālvārnātha temple compound, thus naming it in honor of the worship and meditation previously performed there by Lord Brahmā, for which Ālālanātha was alternatively known as Brahmagiri.[†] At this time he revealed service to the deity of Gauḍīyanātha (Lord Caitanya as Lord of the Gauḍīyas) and in 1931 also established Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa deities therein, naming Them Śrī Gopī-Gopīnātha in accord with the sentiment of separation, and explaining that Ālvārnātha (a deity of Nārāyaṇa) is nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa as Gopīnātha. He declared that the pond located at a short distance from the temple in Ālālanātha, where the deity is feted during the annual Candana-yātrā festival and on the banks of which Caitanya Mahāprabhu would rest, is nondifferent from Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura also considered Ālālanātha nondifferent from Paiṭha, a village in Vraja-*maṇḍala* at the site where Kṛṣṇa had in sport hidden Himself from the *gopīs* who were anxiously looking for Him and, upon being found, manifested His four-armed Nārāyaṇa form, which He could not sustain once Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī arrived. And on his last visit to Ālālanātha, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura further revealed:

> The devotees of Gaurasundara, who is *rādhā-bhāva-dyuti-suvalita* (adorned with the temperament and sheen of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī), cannot serve Kṛṣṇa together with persons who are on other paths.[30] Kṛṣṇa manifested His four-handed form as Nārāyaṇa at Brahmagiri, which is nondifferent from Govardhana-*giri.* Mahāprabhu's adherents are *rūpānugas* and see Ālvārnātha, or Nārāyaṇa, as Dvibhuja Muralīdhara, two-handed Kṛṣṇa with a flute. Most people cannot understand this; hence we have established Gopīnātha here.[31]

During Their installation ceremony, Śrī Gopī-Gopīnātha were taken on a decorated chariot along a trail through luxuriant glades. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī quoted *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* 2.17.55, *vana dekhi' bhrama haya—ei 'vṛndāvana':* "As Lord Caitanya was traversing Jhārikhaṇḍa forest, He mistook it for Vṛndāvana." As they wended through the woods, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was contemplating and also sharing with his disciples his realizations about the mood of this *līlā*.

After the deity installation Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura went to Bentpura, reputed as the birthplace of Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya (which Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura considered spurious) and residence of Śrī Śikhi Māhiti and Śrī Mādhavī-devī, two miles from Ālālanātha. There he fed the local *brāhmaṇas* under the shade of an expansive banyan tree.

In Purī, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura once woke Śrī Paramānanda Vidyāratna at two in the morning and said, "I am going to Ālālanātha." The surprised Paramānanda asked why he was departing at that hour, to which Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura replied, "My Lord is calling me to come immediately. I must go now," and started to leave. Somehow or other a bullock cart was arranged, which soon caught up with the walking Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who negotiated the remainder of the journey by cart. Thereafter his servants kept his traveling paraphernalia ready at all times in case he should decide to depart without warning.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī stated that Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa's *Stavāvalī* should be recited at Ālālanātha.[32]

The Glories of Kurukṣetra

As told by Śrīmad B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda was thinking of opening a Theistic Exhibition in Kurukṣetra, showing with dioramas how Kṛṣṇa and His friends came there from Dvārakā, and the *gopīs* from Vṛndāvana. It is mentioned in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that during the solar eclipse they came to bathe in Brahma-kuṇḍa, a sacred lake in Kurukṣetra. Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted to show that pastime with a diorama, and so the exhibition was arranged. He had handbill invitations printed, and twenty thousand circulated in the area.

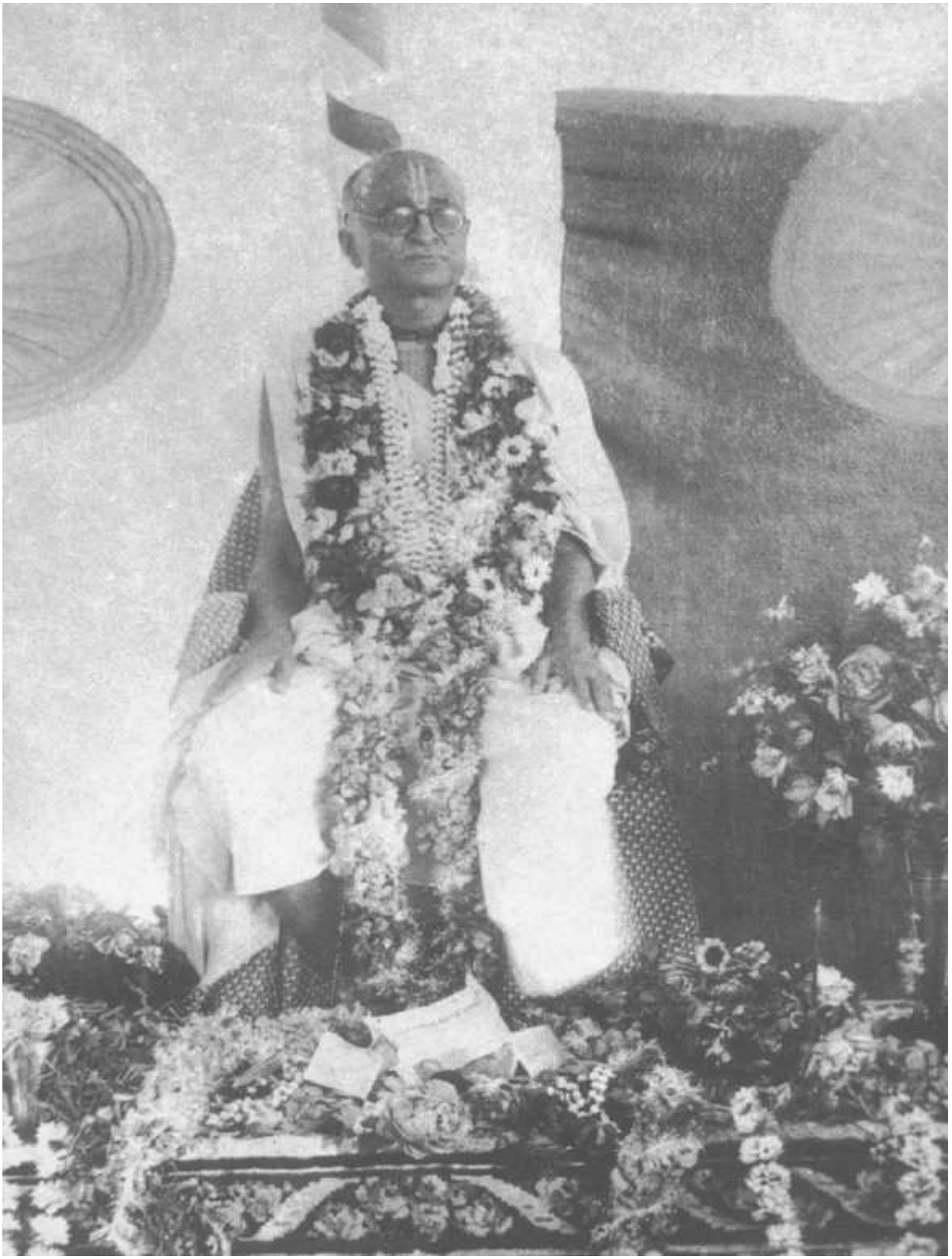
In this connection he told us, "All of you know that only the bogus, hollow people and men of shallow thinking like Vṛndāvana." I was very much perplexed to hear this. I had been told that Vṛndāvana is the highest place of spiritual perfection. I had heard that one who has not mastered his senses cannot enter Vṛndāvana; only liberated souls can enter Vṛndāvana and have the opportunity of discussing about Kṛṣṇa. Vṛndāvana is for the liberated souls; those not liberated from the demands of their senses may live in Navadvīpa, but only liberated souls may live in Vṛndāvana. Now Prabhupāda was saying that shallow thinkers appreciate Vṛndāvana, but a man of real *bhajana,* real divine aspiration, will aspire to live in Kurukṣetra.

Hearing this, I felt as if I had fallen from the top of a tree. "What is this?" I thought. I am a very acute listener, so I was very keen to catch the meaning of his words. The next thought he gave us was that after visiting many different places of pilgrimage Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura remarked, "I desire to spend the last days of my life in Kurukṣetra. I shall construct a cottage near Brahma-kuṇḍa and pass the rest of my days there. Kurukṣetra is the real place of *bhajana.*"

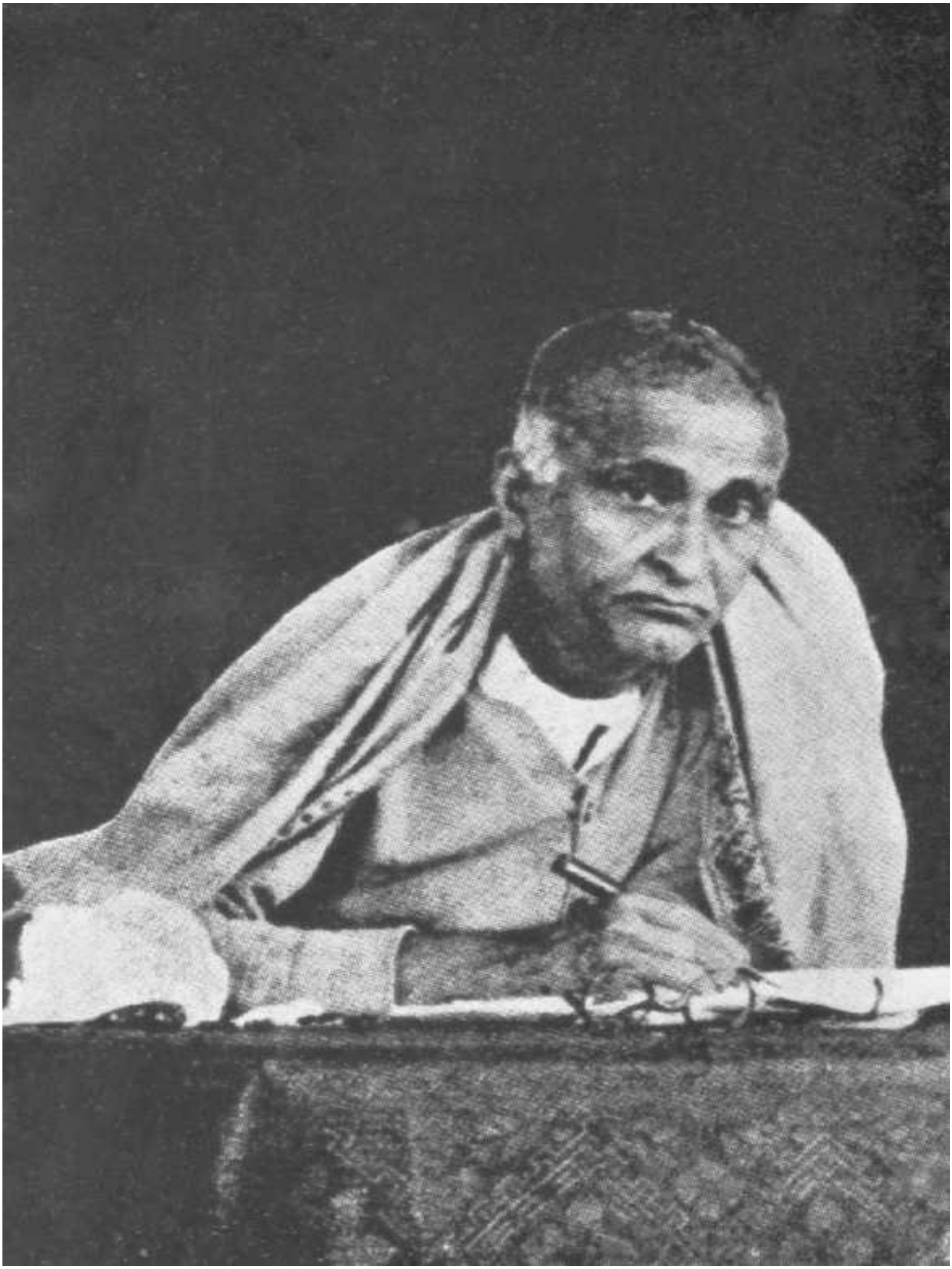
Why? Service is more valuable according to the intensity of its necessity. Shrewd merchants seek a market in wartime because in that dangerous position money is spent like water, without any care for its value. They can earn more money if a war comes. In the same way, when Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's necessity reaches its zenith, service to Her becomes extremely valuable. According to its necessity service is valued. And in Kurukṣetra, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is in the utmost need, because Kṛṣṇa is so close but Their Vṛndāvana-*līlā* is impossible. In a football game, if the ball is just inches from the goal but again comes back it is considered a major loss. In the same way, after a long separation Kṛṣṇa is there in Kurukṣetra, so the hankering for union felt by His devotees must come to its zenith—but because He is in the role of a king, they cannot meet intimately. The circumstances do not allow the Vṛndāvana-*līlā* to take place. So at that time Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī needs the highest service from Her group, the *sakhīs.*

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says that in that situation a drop of service will draw the greatest amount of *prema.* In the pastimes of Rādhā-Govinda there are two aspects: *sambhoga* (divine union) and *vipralambha* (divine separation). When Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are very near to each other but cannot meet intimately, at that time service can draw the greatest gain for the servitors. Therefore Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, "I shall construct a hut on the bank of Brahma-

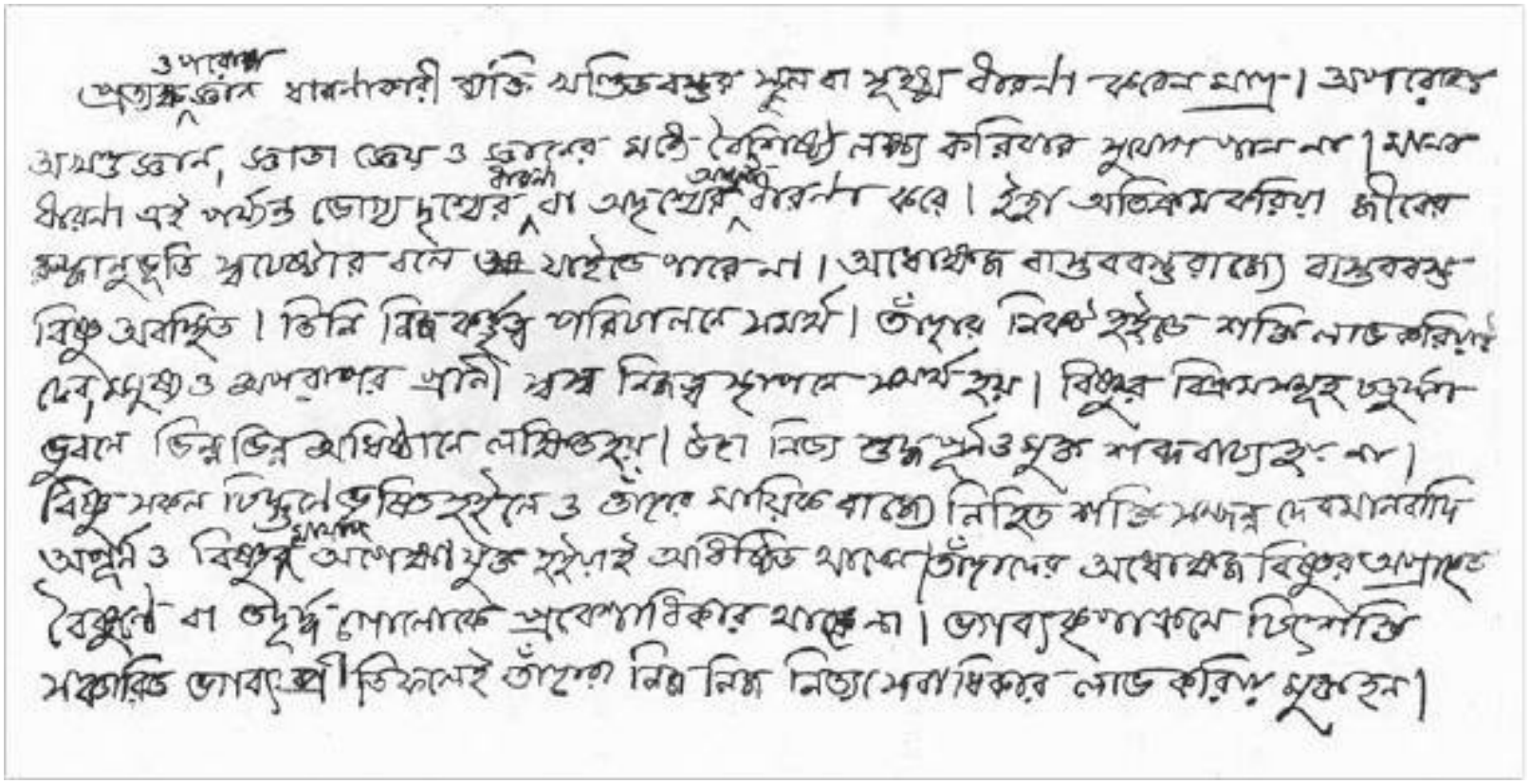
kuṇḍa in Kuruksetra and contemplate rendering service to the Divine Couple. If I can achieve that standard where the prospect of service is so high, then there is no possiblity of ever returning to this mundane plane.” [33]



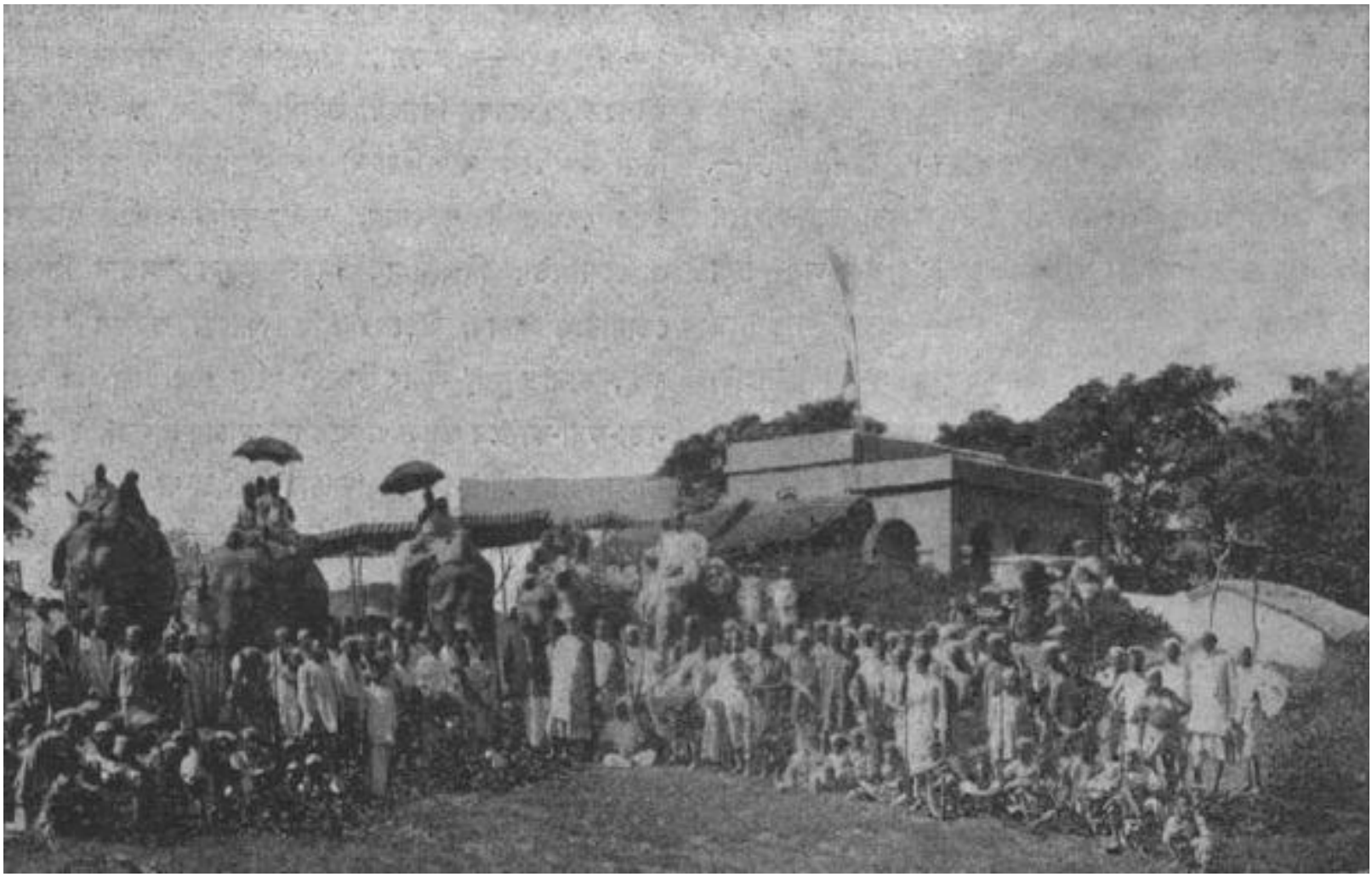
During the Vyāsa-*pūjā* of 1935, in Purī (p. 109)



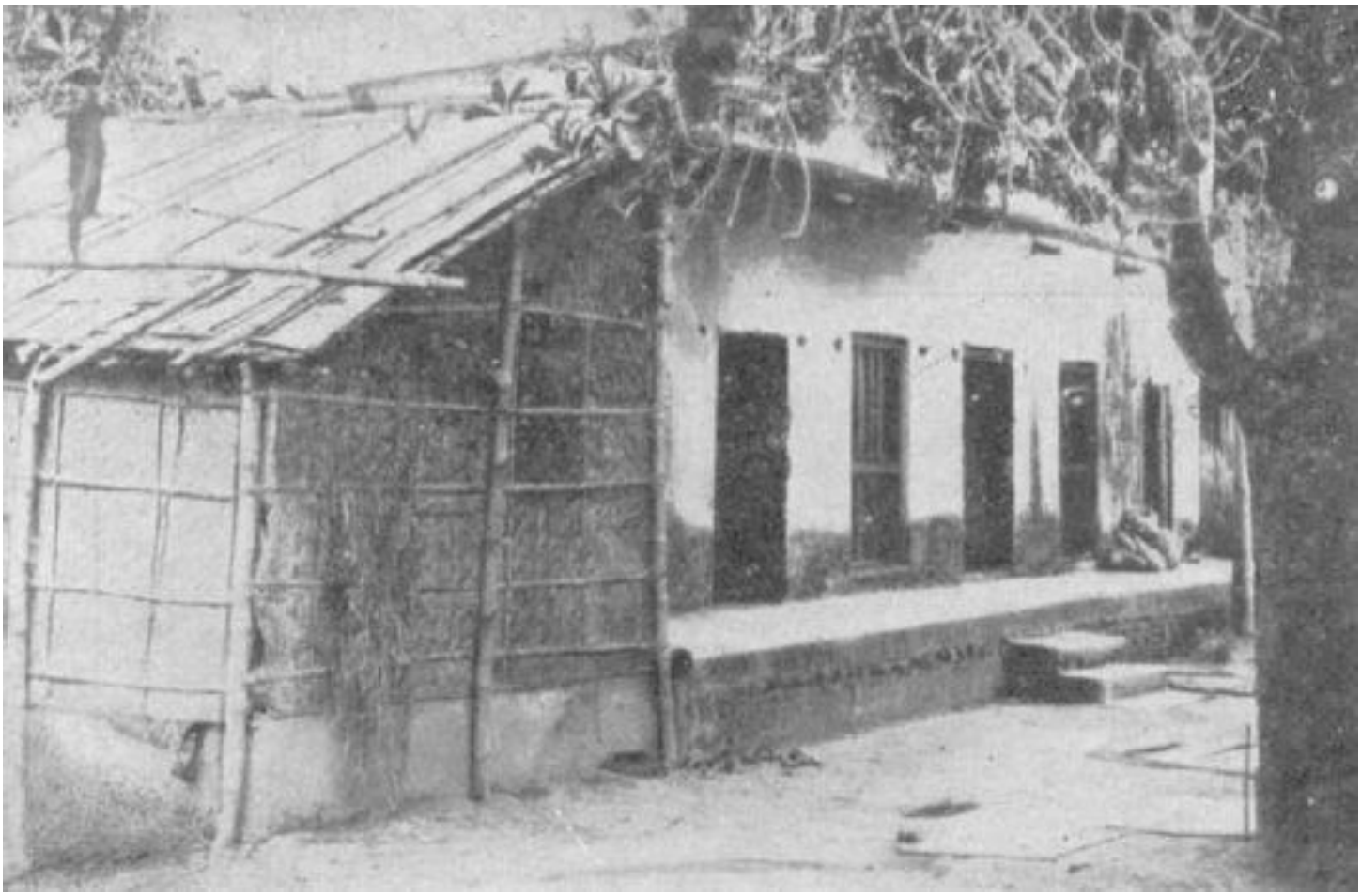
Checking a *Gauḍīya* article at Ekāyana Maṭha, in Haṁsa-*kṣetra,* Nadia district



Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's handwriting. This sample is from the introduction (written July 1936 in Darjeeling) to his commentary on *Kena Upaniṣad*.



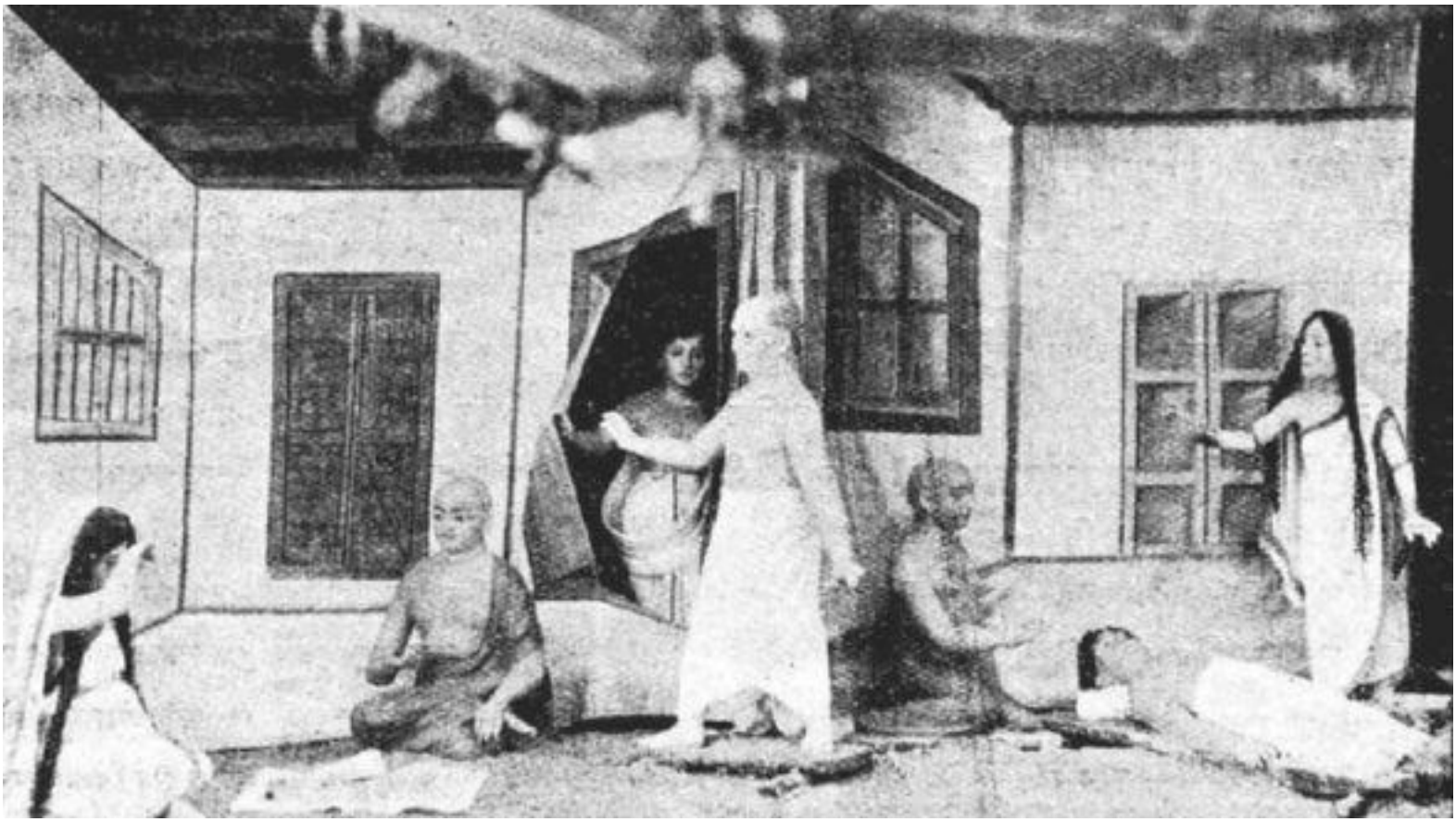
Devotees assembled for *parikramā* of Naimiṣāraṇya cum Nāma-haṭṭa preaching among the general populace. In the background is Śrī Paramahaṁsa Maṭha. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī is standing in the center of the picture. Mounted on one of the elephants are the deities of Śrī Rādhā-Govinda.



Above & top: Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura's birthplace, Modadruma Chatra, Modadrumadvīpa

Annakūṭa at Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, 22 October 1930 (pp. 351–52)

Annakūṭa at Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, 1931 (p. 352)



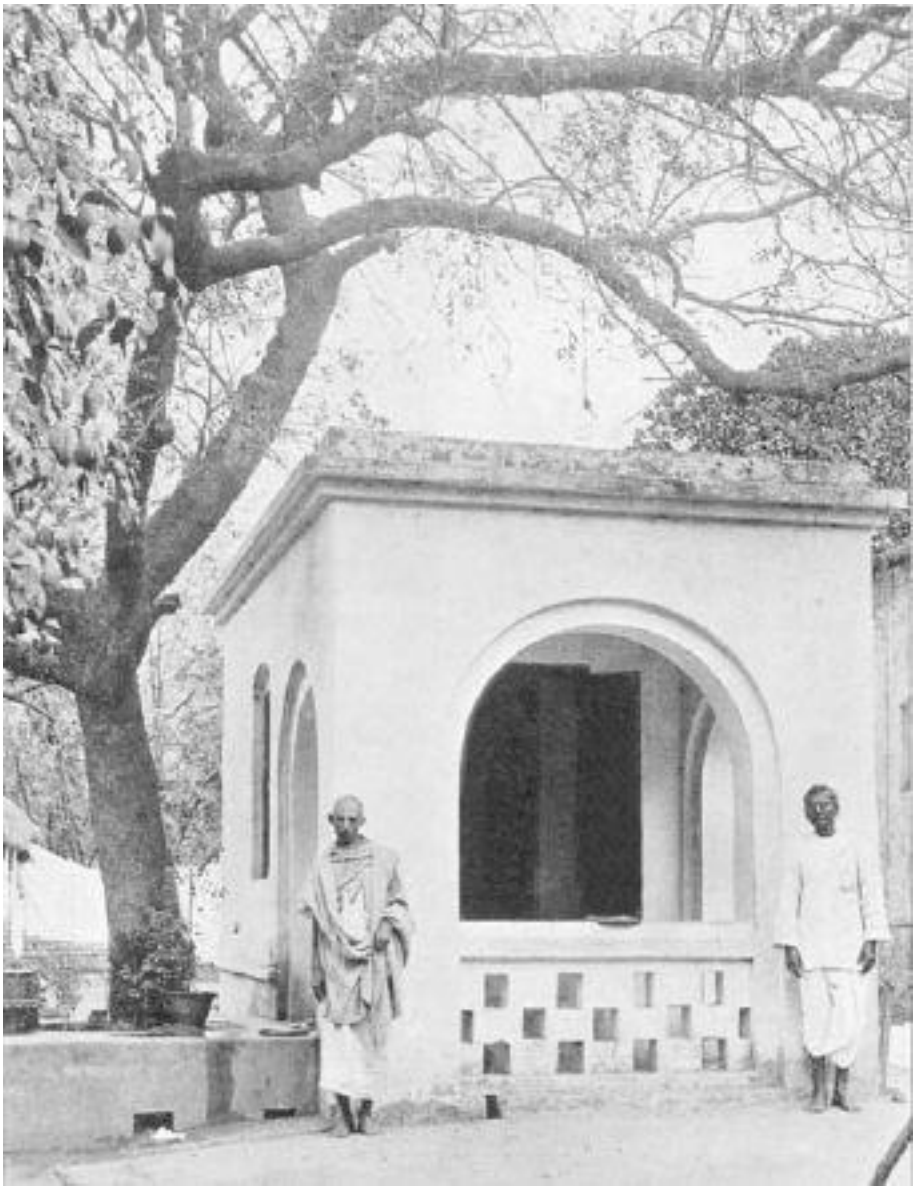
ABOVE, TOP & TOP RIGHT: Dioramas from a Theistic Exhibition

Śrī Advaita Prasāda Dey

LEFT: The Adhokṣaja deity found at the Yogapīṭha, Māyāpur (p. 366)

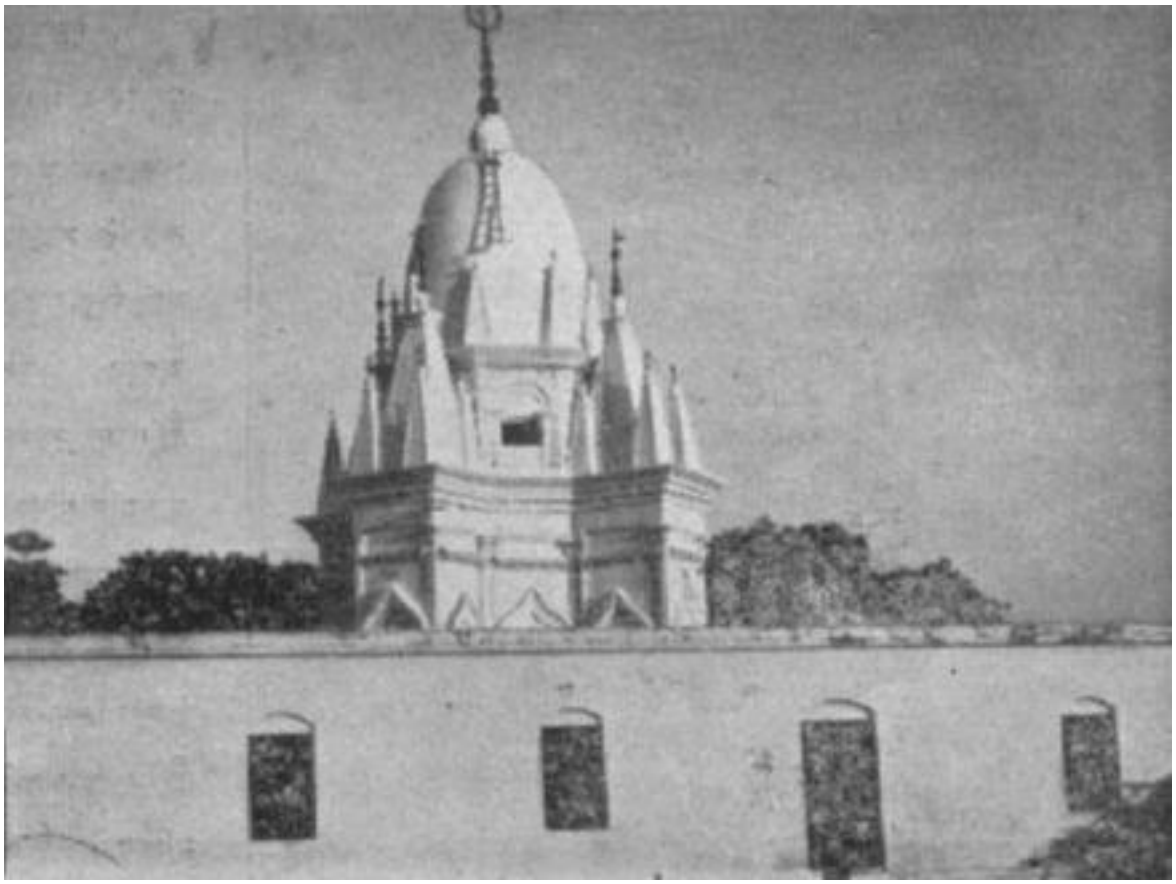
Below & right: The main temple at the Yogapīṭha

Deities of Śrī Śrī Gaura-Viṣṇupriyā at the Yogapīṭha

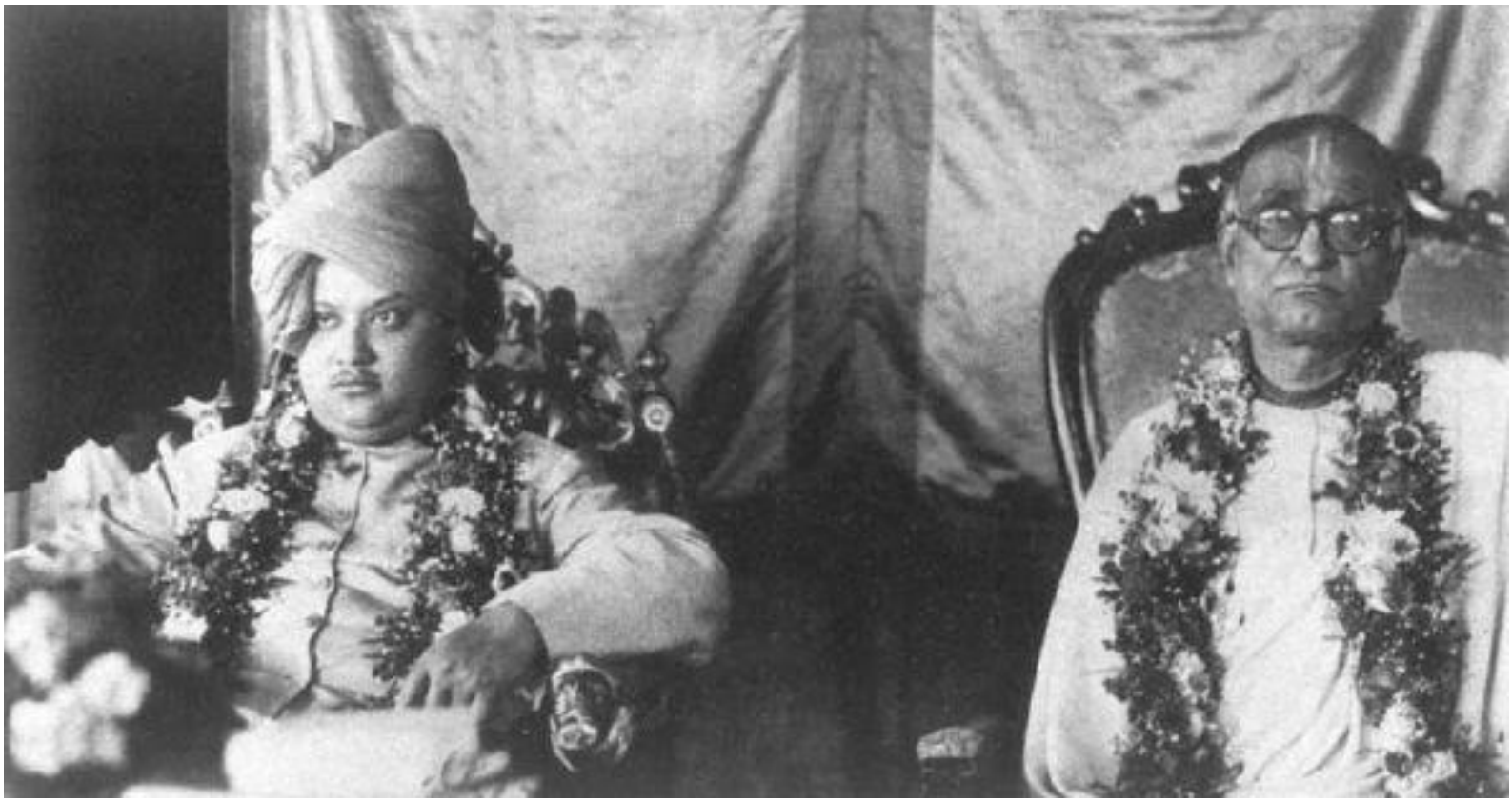


The shrine at the Yogapīṭha representing Śacīmātā's lying-in room

The original temple of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha

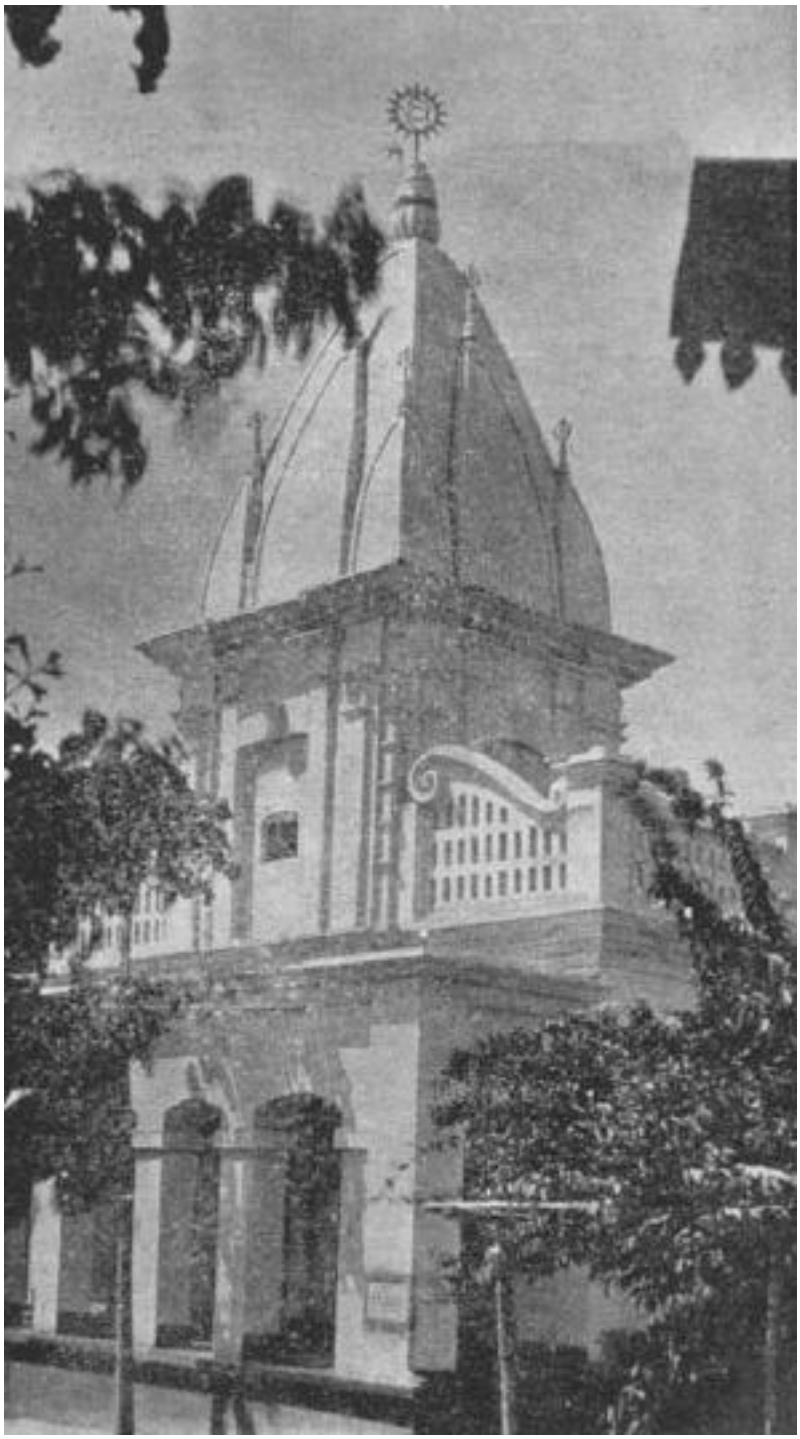


The twenty-nine pinnacled temple of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha



With the Maharaja of Tripura at the inauguration of the new temple at the Yogapīṭha

The *samādhi* of Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī

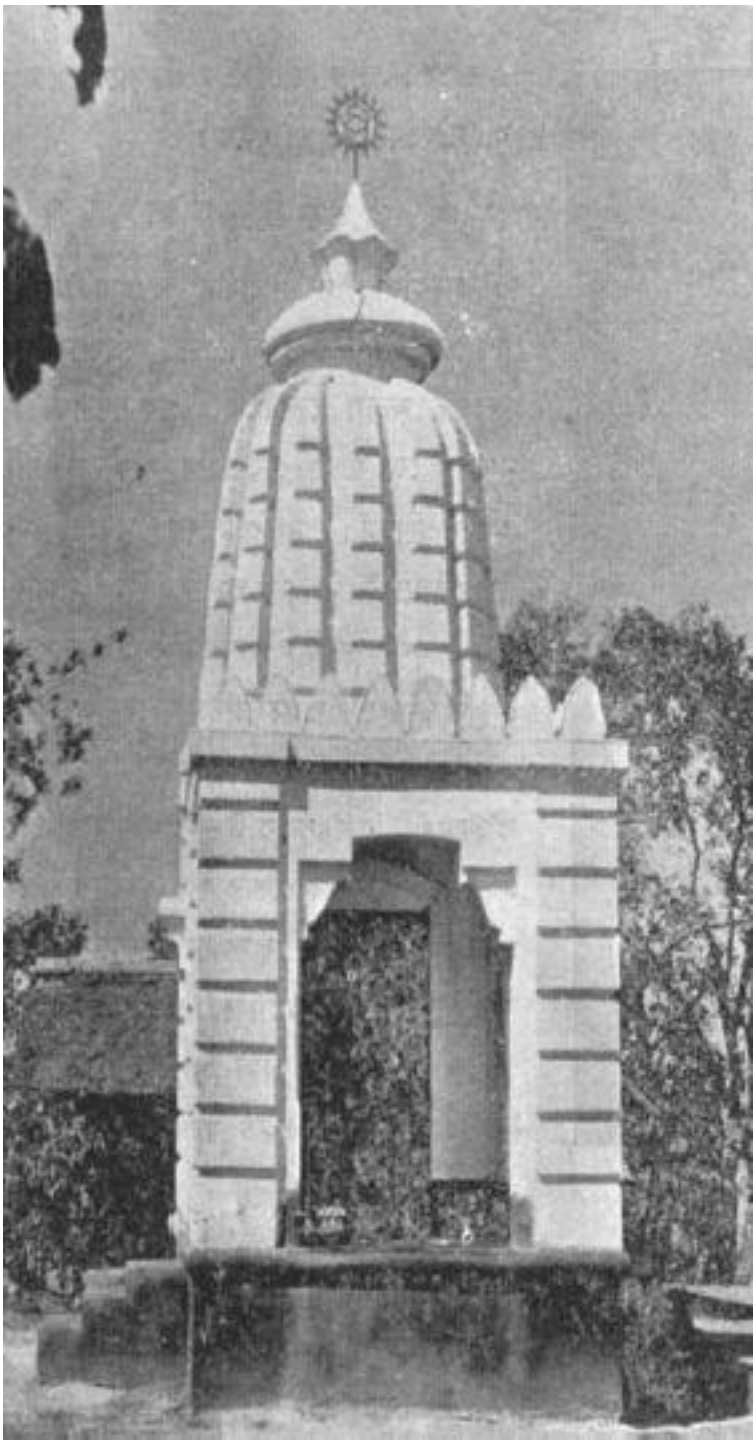


Śrīvāsa Aṅgana

Advaita Bhavan

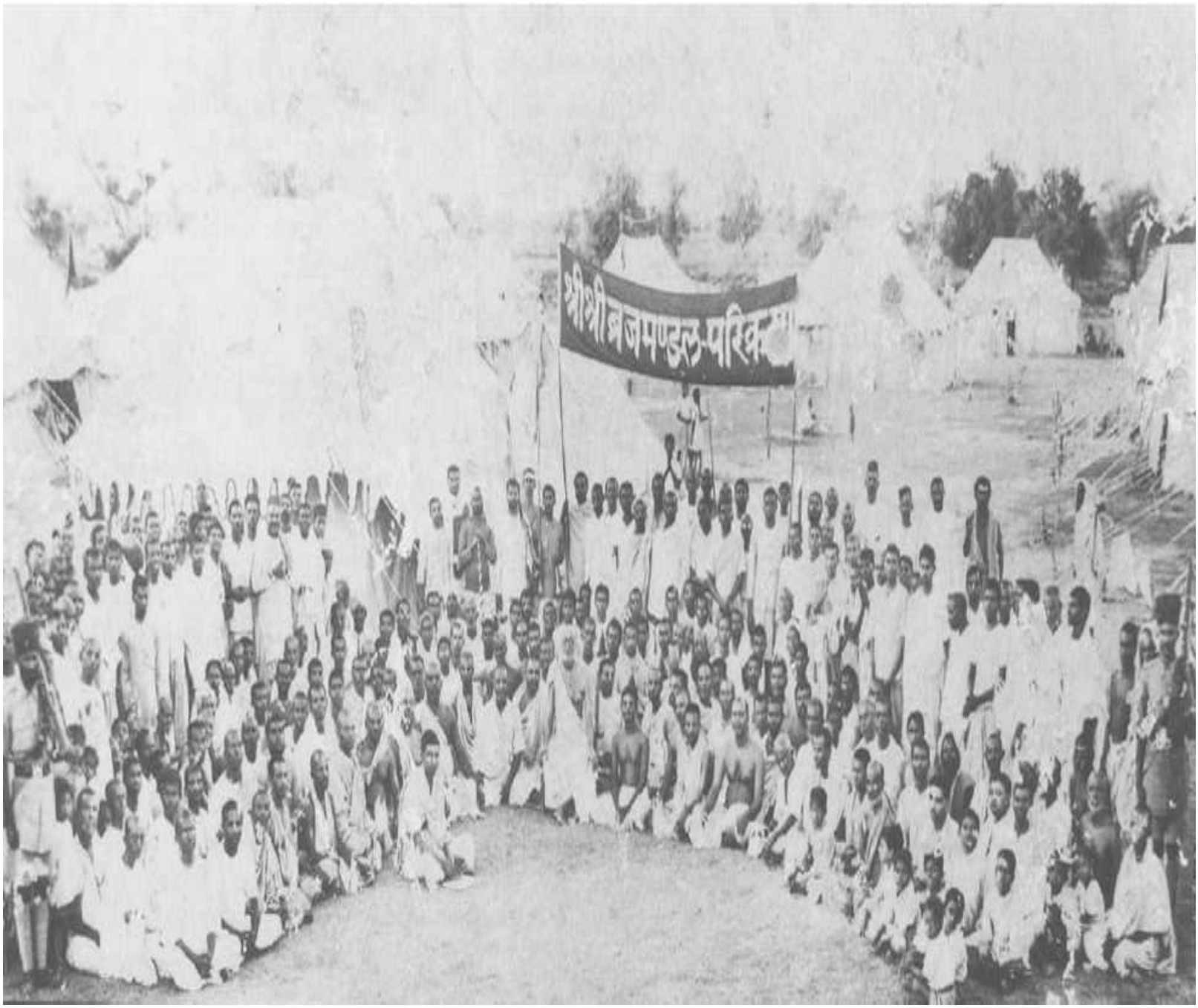
Chand Kazi's *samādhi*

The *vijaya-vigraha* of Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga, on Vraja-maṇḍala Parikramā



Śrī Murāri Gupta Pāṭ

Māyāpur as seen from the confluence of the Gaṅgā and Sarasvatī



Vraja-mandala Parikrama

Tents on the bank of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Lalitā-kuṇḍa during Vraja-maṇḍala Parikramā, and the group of volunteers under Śrīmad Bon Mahārāja's guidance

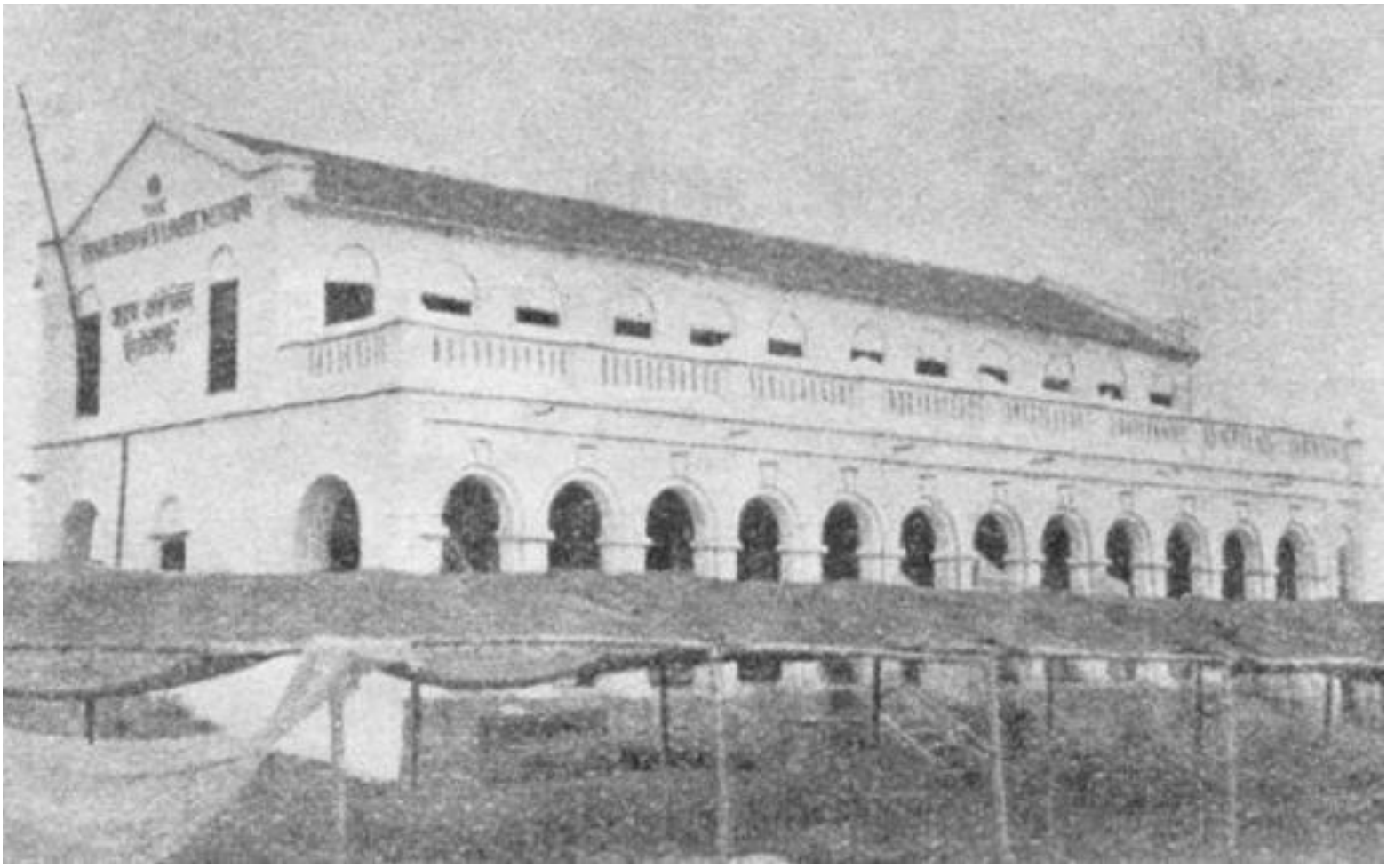
At Śrī Jagannātha Gauḍīya Maṭha, Mymensingh

Caṭaka Kūṭira, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's residence at Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha

At Śrīpāda Adhokṣaja Sevā Kovida's home, Faizabad

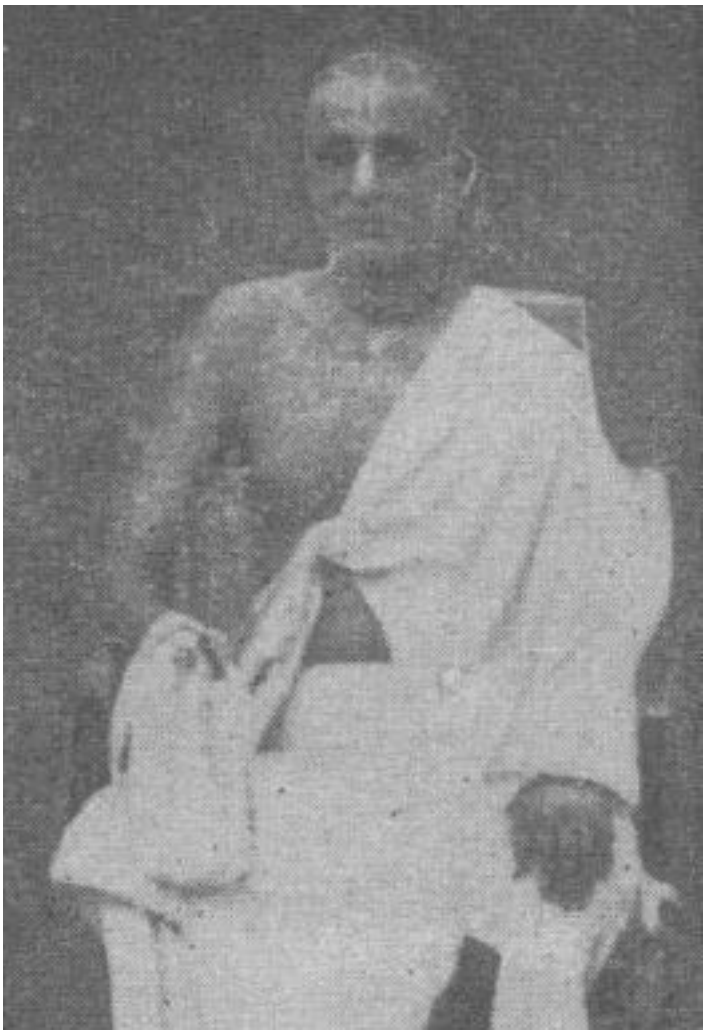
Proceeding along the Maṅgala-ghāṭa path toward Ālālanātha. As the head of Gaura's associates and with a massive *saṅkīrtana* squadron, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was replicating Mahāprabhu's *līlā* of searching for Kṛṣṇa.

With Sir Dr. Deva Prasāda Sarvādhikārī (former vice chancellor of Calcutta University) at Thakur Bhakti Vinode Institute, along with the staff and students



Thakur Bhakti Vinode Institute

Distributing *mahā-prasāda* to indigents during the annual Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha Festival, at Ultadingi Road



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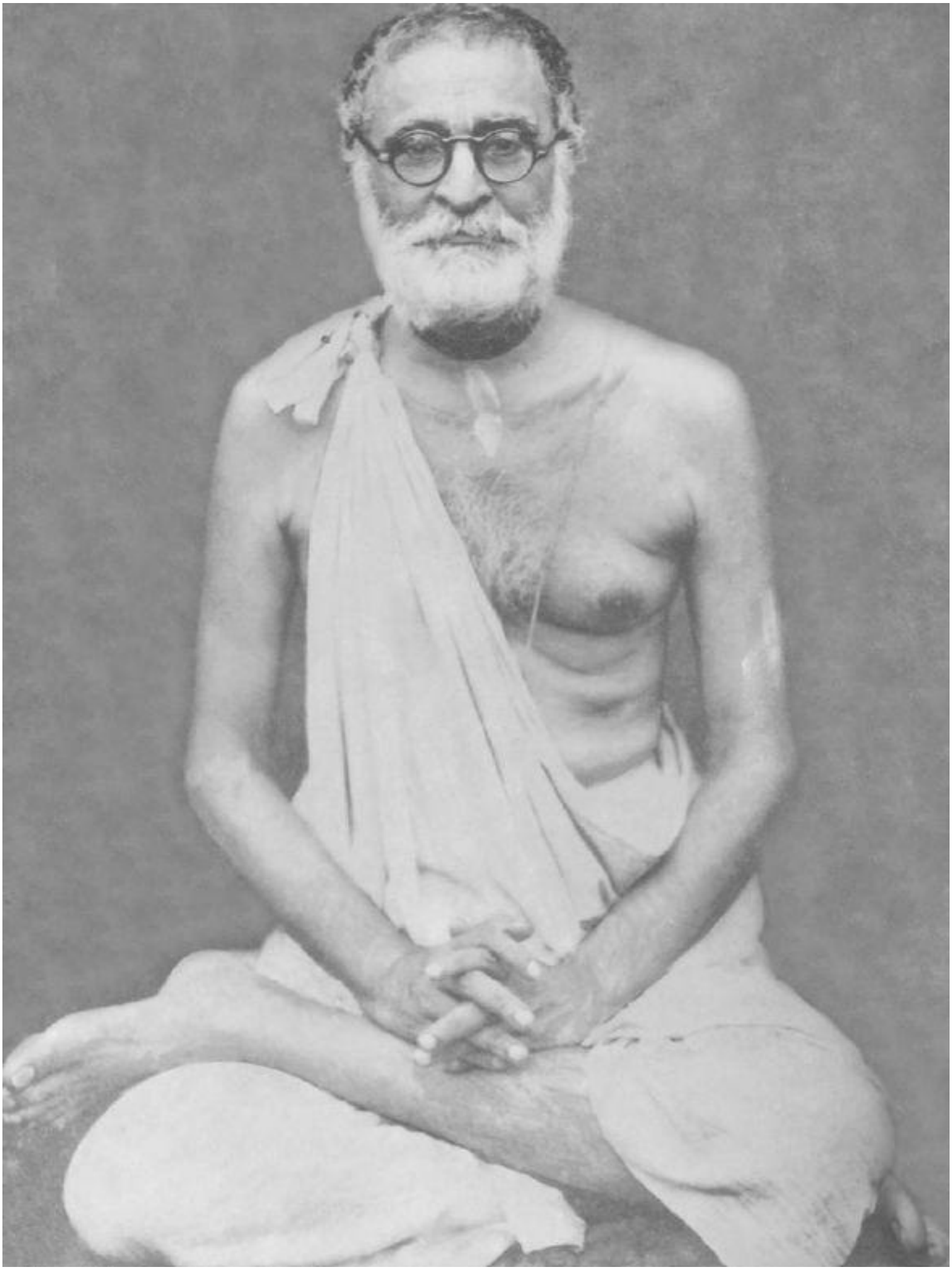
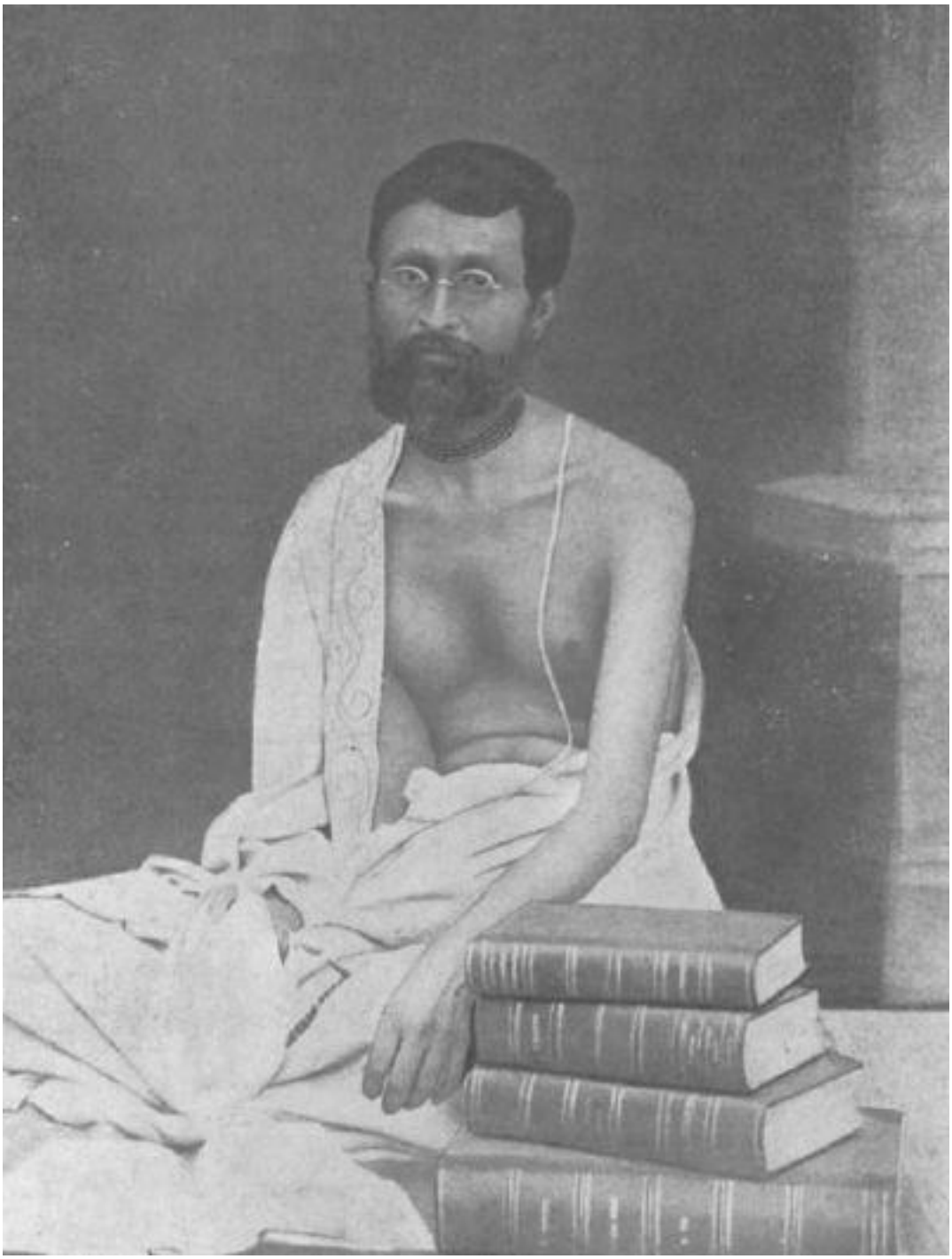


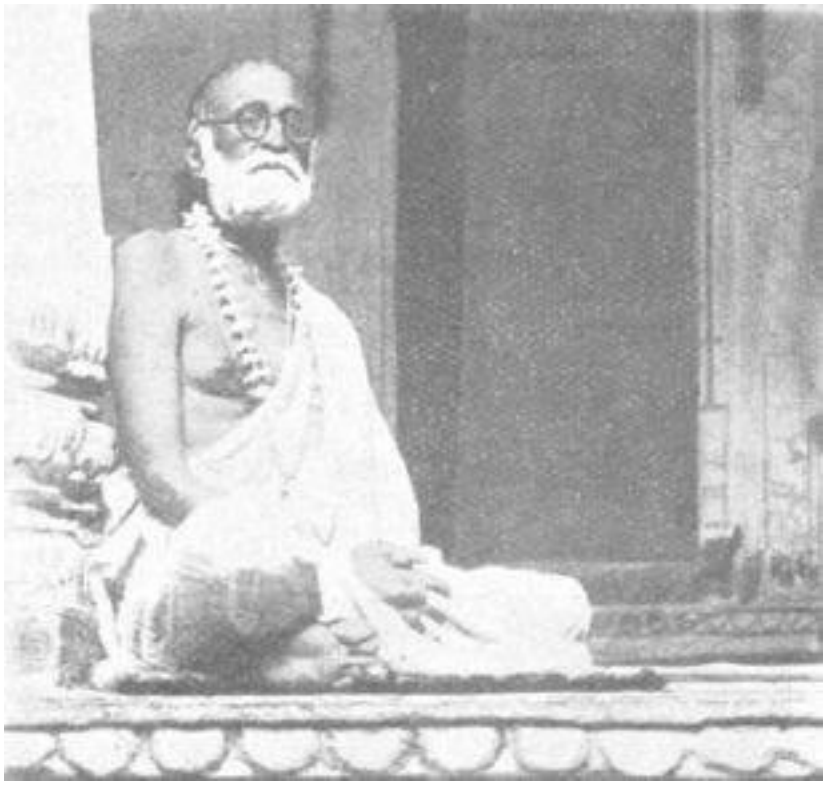
During Cātur-māsya



While observing Cātur-māsya at Vrajapattana

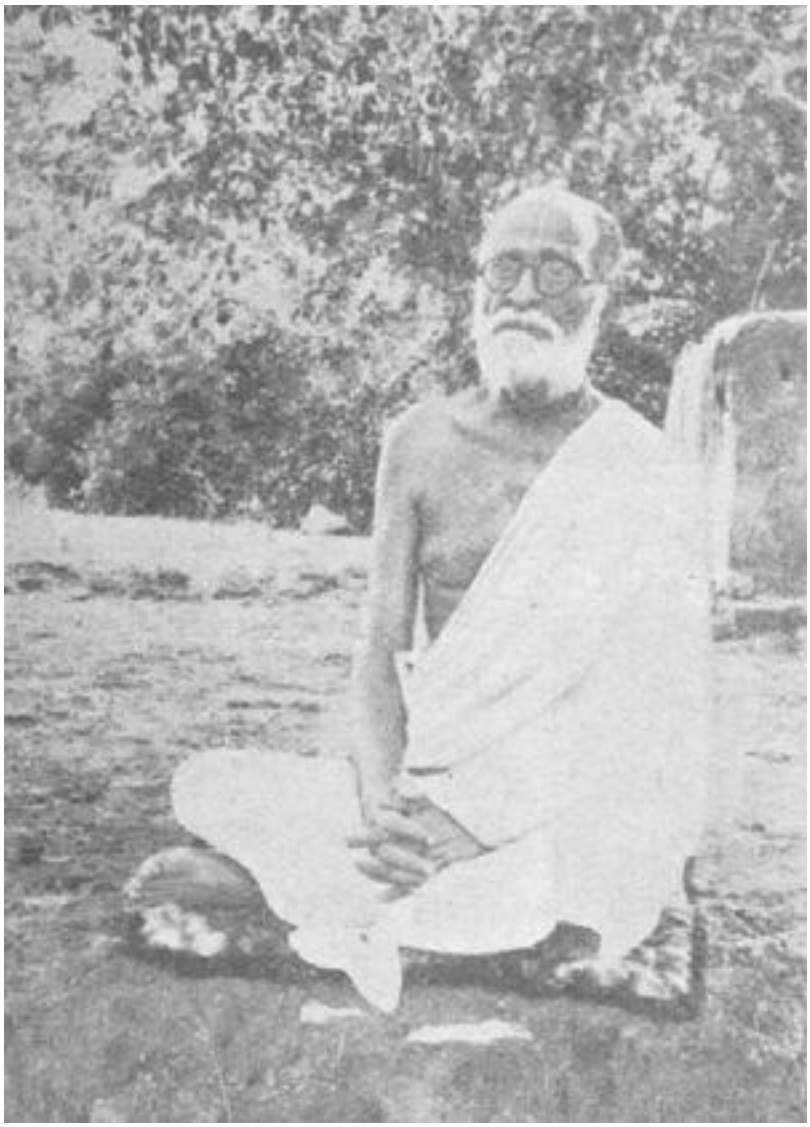
At Śrī Mādhva Gauḍīya Maṭha during Cātur-māsya

At Sārasvata Āsana during Cātur-māsya

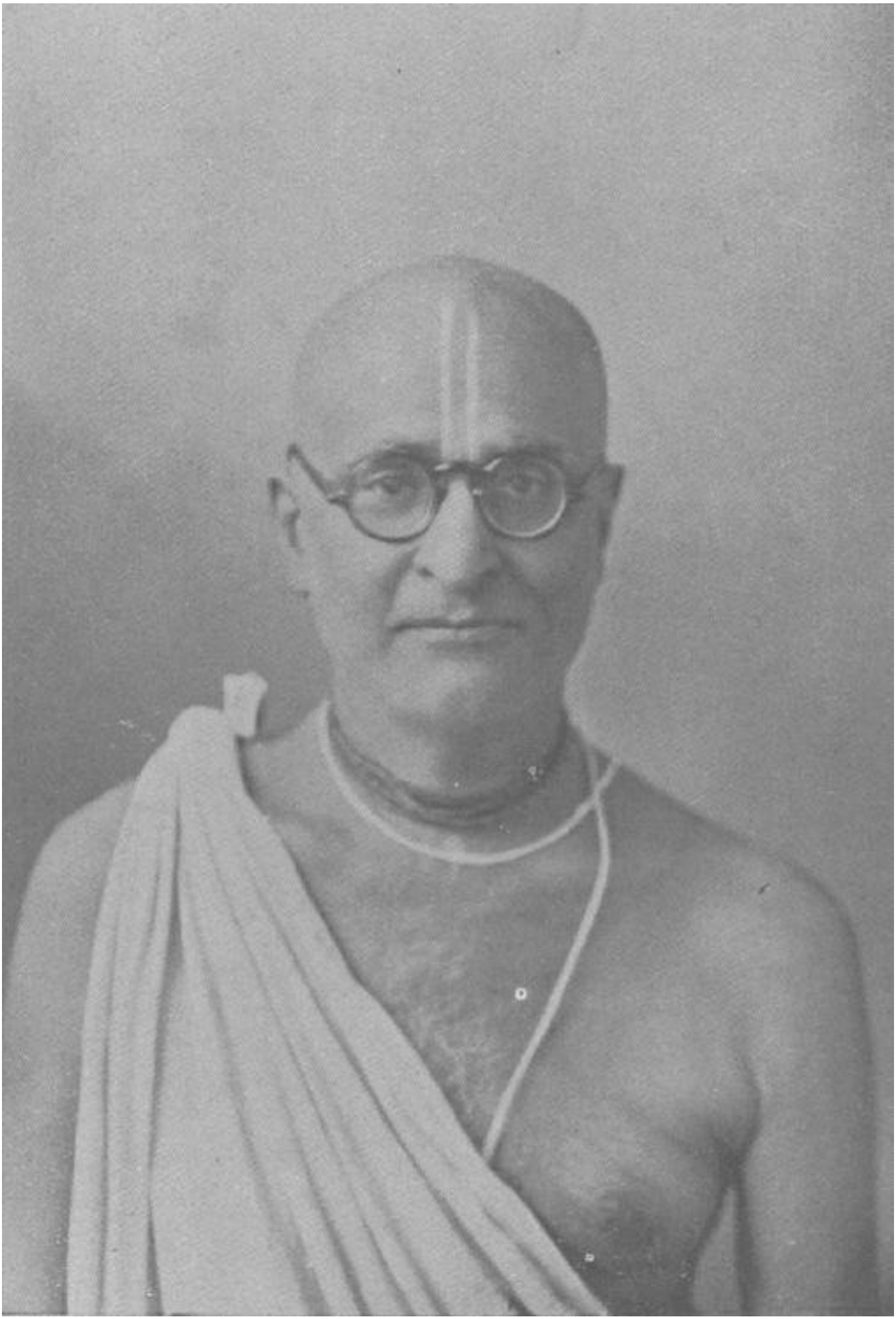


Observing Puruṣottama-vrata in Mathurā

At Sārasvata Śravaṇa-sadana



In Saṅket. This was the last photo taken of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.



During his sixtieth year

Vajrād api kaṭhorāṇi mṛdūni kusumād api: “Harder than a thunderbolt, more tender than a flower.” (*Uttara-rāma-carita* 2.7)

At that time Vraja-*maṇḍala,* like almost all of rural India, was materially undeveloped. There were no proper roads, only dirt tracks, and cars were rarely seen. As the party wended through the tranquil pastoral surroundings, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura described the most important of the innumerable places of Kṛṣṇa-*līlā* and revealed their significance to the accompanying devotees. Śrī Vinoda Bihārī Brahmacārī and others would patrol on horseback, keeping the participants in order and coordinating all necessary arrangements.

Both at halts and along the way, Vraja-*vāsīs,* including many learned *paṇḍitas* residing in Vraja-*maṇḍala,* flocked to see and hear from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. He spoke with *paṇḍitas* in Sanskrit, common folk in Hindi, and local children in very simple Hindi. Parikramā participants were gratified by the ingenuousness and hospitality of the earthy Vraja village folk in extending their usual cordiality toward visiting pilgrims. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī reciprocated by arranging for three to five trucks-full of varieties of sweets and other *mahā-prasāda* items to be distributed daily to Vraja-*vāsīs.* Baskets full of tomatoes, long white radishes, guavas, and other fruit and vegetables were carried from village to village, and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī personally distributed *mahā-prasāda* to all, both young and old. He especially liked to feed Vraja-*vāsī* children. But if his disciples stretched out their hands to receive *mahā-prasāda,* he would say, “No, this is not for you.”

Twenty

Educational Projects

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura lamented that traditional God-oriented schooling had largely been supplanted by job-oriented secular instruction, which he called "godless education," proclaiming that it could only create difficulties for mankind.[1] And he declared, "The present degeneracy of the church of Śrī Caitanya is mainly due to utter neglect of the study of the works of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī.[2] Devotional scholarship following the ideal of Śrī Rūpa and Śrī Jīva being no longer highly regarded, ignoramuses and mundane emotionalists were passing as Vaiṣṇavas. Desiring to reverse these trends, he inaugurated several educational projects, some offering mundane instruction with the aim of gradually introducing transcendental topics. As he explained, without primary education there was no possibility of approaching the recondite topics of *śuddha-bhakti*.[3] Upon first taking up residence in Māyāpur in 1905, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī had attempted to uplift the local population by offering them rudimentary instruction in reading, writing, and other such basics, but due to their indifference he desisted.

In consonance with Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's desire that he inaugurate an educational institution in Māyāpur, in 1927 Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī established Parā-vidyā-pīṭha.[*] The following report appeared in the January 1928 *Harmonist* under the heading "Revival of Learning in Old Navadvīpa; Parā-vidyā-pīṭha at Śrī Māyāpur":

> This residential institution is established by the workers of the Śrī Caitanya Maṭha for disseminating moral, intellectual, and primarily religious culture in the truly nationalistic lines, through the medium of Sanskrit, among students of all caste and age. All branches of Sanskrit learning are taught by specially efficient professors in respective subjects. A comparative study of all schools of philosophy and theology is made in an impartial way. Students are also taught several useful avocations of life in practical lines.
>
> The institution is situated in old Navadvīpa, the birthplace of Mahāprabhu Śrī Caitanya-deva, and is on the banks of the historical lake-like Ballāl Dīghi, over seven hundred years old. The site is away from the populated area, with grand natural scenery around, and is healthy. Pure drinking water is supplied from a deep tube-well within the compound. Free medical help is available.
>
> Only a hundred more deserving students will be admitted free of all costs of tuition, lodging, or boarding. Applications with good reference are invited by the secretary.[4]

Academically capable young men who joined the Gauḍīya Maṭha were sent to study at Parā-vidyā-pīṭha before being inducted into preaching life. Courses afforded a discursive yet comprehensive analysis of Vaiṣṇava studies, with emphasis on Gauḍīya *siddhānta*. Exams were administered by the Parā-vidyā-pīṭha and degrees bestowed by the Navadvīpa-dhāma-pracāriṇī Sabhā, as it had been doing practically since its inception under Śrīla Bhaktivinoda

Ṭhākura's guidance. Degrees were awarded for proficiency in understanding and explaining *śāstra* in terms of its natural conclusion, *śuddha-bhakti.* Most students studied the Bhakti-śāstra course and upon passing were awarded the title Bhakti-śāstrī. The curriculum was not easy, being negotiable only by particularly gifted devotees. To be allowed to even take the examination, aspirants were required first to submit an essay on a given subject; based on that essay they would be accepted or not. For instance in 1930, a typical year, merely twenty-six sat for the test. Apart from Parā-vidyā-pīṭha students, others also could write the exam, as did some Gauḍīya Maṭha devotees who self-studied in preparation. The test session was held in Māyāpur on the day of Gaura-*jayantī,* indicating that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura considered the examination nondifferent from or as important as worshiping Lord Caitanya on His *āvirbhāva-mahotsava.* It was to be completed in one sitting, which for the majority took nearly all day. Although others were assigned to review the papers, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would keenly look through them, often until late at night.

For Bhakti-śāstra there were eight areas of study: *śruti* (the four *Vedas*), *Vedānta* (*Vedānta-sūtra* and *Bhagavad-gītā*) , *Bhāgavatam, sāhitya* (literature, particularly that written by Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*) , *aitihya* (Vedic history), *bhakti-śāstra* (*śāstras* that specifically delineate topics of *bhakti*), *tattva,* and *rasa.* After graduating in Bhakti-śāstra, students could enroll in the Sampradāya-vaibhava course, on the history, teachings, and contributions of various Vaiṣṇava and non-Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas.* Graduates were designated Sampradāya-vaibhavācārya. The stated purpose of the Sampradāya-vaibhava course was to spread knowledge of *parā-vidyā* by removing the obstacles of *aparā-vidyā,* and to discover genuinely competent teachers of Bhakti-śāstra."[5*] The *Pañcarātra* course taught Gauḍīya deity worship, ritual, and procedures. Successful students were designated Pañcarātrācārya and thereby authorized to perform marriages, *śrāddhas,* and other ceremonies for Gauḍīya Maṭha *gṛhasthas.*

The Parā-vidyā-pīṭha also offered a Sanskrit course leading to a government-recognized degree, which was pursued by several of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's disciples, especially those who joined at an early age, and also by some nondevotee students.

However, in a lecture in 1931 Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī commented:

> I endeavored to found an institution for impartial comparative analysis of ancient and spiritual manuscripts, scriptures, philosophy, and science. Yet most students become satisfied simply upon learning a few rules of Sanskrit grammar, or by gaining competence to study ordinary dramas, or on being awarded a title for aptitude in Sanskrit, and consider such the ultimate limit or supreme goal of life.[*] But it was not for that reason that I established the school. My wish has remained unfulfilled. Moreover, the majority of people cannot even conceive of such a purpose. Such is the condition of the country![6]
>
> I made an attempt to systematically teach *śāstra* at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, with the intention of attracting students by imparting mundane education and gradually introducing *śāstrīya* topics. However, because of the students' strong preference for economically lucrative knowledge, *śāstra* was not taught.[7]

In November 1931, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī inaugurated the Thakur Bhakti Vinode Institute in Māyāpur as an English-medium school under the auspices of Calcutta University for offering regular curriculum education to local village children. Gauḍīya Maṭha *gṛhasthas* were encouraged to send their children there, and several did. The older students, in grades five through ten, received one hour of spiritual instruction each afternoon. In the words of Śrī Bhakti Pradīpa Tīrtha Mahārāja, a teacher in his prior secular life and the first headmaster of the institute, "Thakur Bhakti Vinode Institute has been established in order to eradicate in toto the evils of godless education being imparted in our schools and colleges."[8]

In Purī, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura commented that in accordance with the *Padma Purāṇa* statement that from there Puruṣottama-*kathā* would spread everywhere, he had desired to establish an educational center in Purī.[9]

Twenty-one

Collection and Spending

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had his sannyasis and *brahmacārīs* of each Maṭha go out daily begging door to door to cover the maintenance expenses. He also kept them busy collecting for ambitious schemes that he was ever conceiving for presenting Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti* in a manner designed to capture public attention. These required tremendous financing, seemingly beyond the means of a group of indigent monks. But Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī seemed to have mystic potency for procuring money whenever it was needed for a specific undertaking, although no one could imagine from where it would come.

One time in Calcutta in 1919 Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī suddenly declared, "Here at Bhaktivinoda Āsana we must gorgeously celebrate the *tirobhāva-mahotsava* of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Organize a massive festival. Invite thousands and feed them all." His few disciples had no idea how this could be possible, as the scheduled date was looming ahead and they were already strained just to maintain the regular activities of the Āsana. Shortly thereafter, a zamindar visited the Āsana for the first time, and after hearing Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī speak for only a few minutes, volunteered to contribute thirty maunds of rice and a cash donation for the festival—during which over a ton of rice *prasāda* was distributed.

But Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī did not simply rely on miracles. He utilized the traditional method of religious sponsorship, namely receiving major contributions from wealthy patrons, by maintaining links with those who had donated substantially to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's projects, particularly Sir Maṇīndra-candra Nandī, Śrī Nafar-candra Pal Chaudhuri, and the Tripura kings; and in the course of preaching he also inspired the largess of several other moneyed persons. Major offerings, usually of land or funds for constructing a Maṭha, were reported in the *Gauḍīya,* which featured photos of the donors and praised their example as a devotional act (in contradistinction to the ordinary piety that accrues from mundane charity).

In addition, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī continued a fund-raising system introduced to the Gauḍīya world by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in accord with changed social conditions: soliciting numerous modest contributions from a pool of moderately prosperous middle-class supporters. For instance, in 1920 he had a leaflet printed and sent to many known sympathizers throughout Bengal, entreating them to donate for deity service in Māyāpur:

> The daily service to Śrī Śrī Gaura-Viṣṇupriyā and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava at the birthplace of Mahāprabhu, Māyāpur Yogapīṭha, has now continued unbroken for twenty-seven years. The Navadvīpa-dhāma-pracāriṇī Sabhā has very nicely held an annual festival there and maintained Mahāprabhu's houses and so on. For the last twenty years the maharaja of independent Tripura state has sent a monthly contribution of twenty-five rupees to meet

daily expenses. And sometimes other devotees make donations for the same purpose. Nowadays prices have increased, so we request the community of Gaura-*bhaktas* to contribute a monthly amount, according to their ability, to improve service to the deities.

You are an object of esteem and faith for the pure devotees of Gaura and are dedicated to the highest benefit. The devotees of Gaura will be unlimitedly happy if by the end of the month you send a reply to inform how many rupees you agree to donate monthly for distribution of Mahāprabhu's *prasāda* to Vaiṣṇavas.

Tridaṇḍi-bhikṣu

Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī

Following this plea, monthly offerings totaling fifty rupees were pledged by various devotees.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was expert at engaging money in Kṛṣṇa's service. It seemed that no matter how much his disciples collected, he could always spend more. Sometimes he had them collect for a specific project and then spent the money otherwise, after which he again requested funds for the original undertaking. For instance, Bhakti Sāraṅga Prabhu once solicited a donation from the Maharaja of Mayurbhanj for constructing a temple in Purī. The estimated requirement was fifteen thousand rupees, and the maharaja gave eight thousand in advance. Bhakti Sāraṅga Prabhu turned the sum over to his *gurudeva,* who promptly spent the entire amount for the upcoming Theistic Exhibition in Māyāpur. By regularly starting projects beyond the immediate means of the mission, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura kept it perpetually in debt. On this theme he once expounded:

Preach the *kīrtana* of the Supreme Lord, even if in so doing you have to incur debt. To pay off that debt you will have to perform further *sevā.* When your creditors pressure you, you will be compelled to beg more alms. And since the pious householders will not give you alms unless your character and conduct are wholly uncontaminated, you will be forced to preserve a pure lifestyle with great determination and conscientiousness. I won't leave even a paisa for you, so that in the future you will not indulge in laziness or give up your devotional lives full of Hari-*kīrtana* and Hari-*sevā*.[1]

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda recalled:

You bring money and he'll spend. And if you say, “Sir, we collected this money for this purpose...” “Yes.” He spent. “You again collect.” Somebody has paid for constructing a temple and he has spent for another purpose. Then when the devotee will say, “Oh, what will this man say?” “That's alright. You collect again.” He'll get some money, then make some arrangement for a doll exhibition and spend all the money.[2]

Sending sannyasis and *brahmacārīs* out for begging and keeping them in financial difficulty was meant to help them become humble and pure. It was not an easy service, especially in the

cities, where modernized urbanites mostly considered money sweeter than honey and were not eager to relinquish it, especially to sadhus, whom they tended to disdain as a feckless parasitic excrescence of civilized society.

> The Maṭha is the center of Hari-*kīrtana,* and Hari-*kīrtana* is life and consciousness. To make sure that there is no place for sloth, bad conduct, trivial thought, gossip, or vulgar desire at the Maṭha, you must go door to door, where your Hari-*kīrtana* will be tested by the public. They will think they are the givers and you the receivers of alms, in other words, that their status is higher than yours, and will criticize you in many ways, considering you objects of their mercy. Perhaps also some of them will be ready to kick you out. Then on one hand, you will be able to become *tṛnād api sunīca* (lower than straw) and *mānada* (respectful to others), and on the other, you will take sincere care to make your lives and characters pure and exemplary. Besides, it will be beneficial for you that as you correct the mistakes of the common people by citing the message of sadhu, *śāstra,* and guru-*varga,* you yourselves will not commit those same mistakes.
>
> Do not be upset if anyone criticizes you personally. But your guru-*varga,* the *śāstra,* and the *mahājanas* are completely faultless, supremely liberated, and eternal associates of the Lord, and by speaking the actual truth you should correct anyone who criticizes them. By doing so, both yourselves and the foolish criticizers will gain topmost auspiciousness. You may cultivate unenthusiasm for door-to-door *bhikṣā* and, while still beset by *anarthas,* indulge in slothfulness on the plea of trying to avoid others' criticisms, and consider *nirjana-bhajana* as one's best interest. But in so doing your character will not become corrected, nor will you be able to attain the life of actual devotional practice. I will never give you the opportunity to become deceitful on the path of devotion by your absconding to a reclusive residence where no one will hear your words or even see you and your heart will thus remain undisciplined. You are my dearest friends. You may fall into difficulty, you may gain temporary honor from the public, or temporarily become the object of their blasphemy, which you find unpleasant and intolerable and thus desire to give up the path of satisfying Bhagavān's senses to engage in satisfying those of the public and of oneself —but I will not allow this to happen to you.[3]

None of the Gauḍīya Maṭhas had a bank account; all funds received were promptly spent. Each year before Gaura-*pūrṇimā,* loans were taken to cover the cost of the upcoming festival, reimbursement usually being completed shortly before Janmāṣṭamī, for which new loans were required, gradually paid off just prior to the next Gaura-*pūrṇimā.* Whenever sufficient funds arrived, creditors were called to come quickly and take their due lest in the meantime the present amount be spent for another purpose.

Having drawn a loan to expedite construction of the Madras Maṭha, devotees who were stationed there apprehensively informed their guru-*mahārāja,* expecting that he would be dissatisfied. But he expressed appreciation: "You have risked your future for serving Kṛṣṇa. Not only is the present being used in His service, but you have also pledged your future to

Him, for by incurring debt you have committed yourselves to work later on to clear it. I am very pleased to learn that you have taken such risk."

During the annual festival of the Gauḍīya Maṭha in Calcutta, preachers were daily dispatched to different parts of the city for collection. A standard technique was to approach a local gentleman and ask him for names of neighboring pious and benevolent citizens who might be inclined to donate. One day Śrīmad Bon Mahārāja and one or two *brahmacārīs* were directed by a man to a specific house, with the assurance that they would be well received there. Finding the door ajar, Śrīmad Bon Mahārāja entered, surprising a woman in the hallway who asked, "You are a sadhu. What do you want from me?" Notwithstanding her gender, Śrīmad Bon Mahārāja presented a printed invitation to the festival and requested a donation. Hearing guffaws, he turned and saw the man who had sent them there, watching mischievously from the road with some friends—and realized he had been sent to a brothel! Shocked and shamed, he returned to the Maṭha, related the incident to his guru-*mahārāja,* and refused to go for further *bhikṣā.* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura devoted his next lecture to addressing issues thus raised:

> Many of you have come to me leaving behind substantial personal property, yet still I send you for collection. Do you think that I am mistaken in so doing? Materialistic people will certainly always want to corral us within their *māyā,* but we must learn to utilize every situation for serving Kṛṣṇa. Then only can we be saved. So whatever happens to us, we should deal with others in such a way as to give them an impression of Kṛṣṇa. Although not everyone will be favorable, we should nonetheless attempt to make all into friends. *Viṣaya-samūha sakali 'mādhava':* "All sense objects are meant for service to Mādhava."[4] So nothing in this world should be rejected, but engaged in His service. Renunciation does not mean elimination. As you belong to Kṛṣṇa, others also belong to Kṛṣṇa. If you alone want a connection with Kṛṣṇa, abandoning others, then they will remain your enemies, and one day they will attract you to their position. So why should you be afraid of any circumstance? Rather, when you see that everything is meant only for Kṛṣṇa's service, you will see that all situations are propitious and everyone is a friend. By this positive adjustment to the environment, by seeing everything in relation to Kṛṣṇa, everything will remind you of Kṛṣṇa. Visualizing anything as non-Kṛṣṇa ought to be abandoned, for there is no non-Kṛṣṇa.
>
> *īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ yat kiñca jagatyāṁ jagat*
> *tena tyaktena bhuñjīthā*
>
> Everything within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord and should be accepted thus.[5]

Despite widespread deprecation, the Gauḍīya Maṭha received financial backing from persons convinced of its message:[*]

> It continues to receive the hearty support of numerous members of all communities. It is carrying on a worldwide propaganda on voluntary contribution, most of which is collected

by its preachers from charitably disposed persons. Those who give to the preachers of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, as a rule, do so unconditionally. It is on this kind of disinterested charity that the Gauḍīya Maṭha is subsisting through years of economic depression, unprecedented in the annals of mankind.[6]

Every paisa that came to the Maṭha and how it was spent was supposed to be recorded. A list of donors and an expenditure report were published regularly in *Sajjana-toṣaṇī,* and later in the *Gauḍīya,* including names of those having donated less than a rupee.[†] Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura stated that every last paisa collected by the servants of the Gauḍīya Maṭha by laboring greatly from morning till evening was to be spent in propagating the necessity to satisfy Kṛṣṇa's senses, and for stopping the sense gratification of the world populace, all of whom were suffering due to bewilderment.[7] On Gaura-*jayantī* in 1929 at the Yogapīṭha, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura berated Śrī Vaiṣṇavānanda Vraja-vāsī and other preachers for directly spending *bhikṣā* on personal items such as cloth, umbrellas, and shoes.[*] He called together the leaders and explained, "Any collection should come into the temple accounts. First the deities' needs should be met, and if there is any balance the Maṭha will see what you require, not that you take directly from the income." He further warned, "If the *bhikṣā* brought with considerable difficulty by the *brahmacārīs* and sannyasis is misspent, the mission will be wrecked. Then a day will come when the *pūjārīs* will take from the donation box to buy coconut oil for their wives' hair."[†]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī discouraged deceptive methods of collection and did not acknowledge that the end justifies the means. He inculcated that *bhikṣā* was to be accompanied by and was a function of preaching, and that its real purpose, and indeed of the whole Gauḍīya Maṭha institution, was to collect souls, not money. He did not want his disciples to be money-oriented, and was concerned that those inclined for collection be at least as enthusiastic for *bhajana* as for *bhikṣā*. Often it seemed that he was actually impeding collection efforts—for instance, by insisting that the car not be given to those devotees known as effectual collectors—among whom the most reputed were Aprākṛta Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī (nicknamed Banerjee Number One), Śrīpāda Hayagrīva Brahmacārī (Banerjee Number Two), and Śrīmad Gabhastinemi Mahārāja. Nevertheless, these and other collectors formulated various pragmatic techniques to induce affluent men to gain eternal spiritual opulence by parting with their treasured wealth.

Once Śrīmad Gabhastinemi Mahārāja visited the home of a rich man in Bombay to request a donation for making tube wells for Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, lacking which the resident sadhus were facing much inconvenience. The man offered him some fruit and sweets, saying, "Take this first and then we'll discuss." Yet Śrīmad Nemi Mahārāja declared, "I won't take a crumb unless you agree to sponsor three tube wells." The man's wife anxiously entreated her husband, "It will be inauspicious if this sadhu leaves without taking any food. Please give him the money." The donation was clinched, but upon hearing how, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura became displeased.

Śrīmad Bodhāyana Mahārāja once requested the chief income tax officer in Cuttack to help collect donations from the Marwaris, thinking that by the tax collector's presence they would be

intimidated into giving. When the officer refused on grounds of malfeasance, Mahārāja requested, "At least let me take your car to return to the Maṭha," which the officer agreed to. Mahārāja took it to the bazar and there solicited contributions from the Marwaris, who were cowed by seeing the officer's car and hence profusely donated money, clothes, and similar items. Bodhāyana Mahārāja untruthfully told one of the merchants, "We have three hundred *brahmacārīs,* so please give us three hundred vests"—which the man did.

When Bodhāyana Mahārāja arrived at the gate of Saccidānanda Maṭha he loudly called out, "*Jaya* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja *ki jaya*!" He thought that surely his guru-*mahārāja* would be pleased with him. Yet when Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī heard how the collection had been secured, he became angry like fire and arranged to have everything returned. He was so upset that he fasted for the rest of the day.

Śrīmad Bodhāyana Mahārāja would bluff that the Maṭha housed thousands of *brahmacārīs,* maintained a leper colony with a thousand inmates, ran a student hostel, or conducted massive programs for feeding the poor. All that being false, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī dispraised such tactics. His disapproval of pandering to donors, encapsulated in his saying "No big man has bought my head," made some of his leading preachers hesitant to introduce important worldly people to him. They would think, "Now Guru-mahārāja will say something unbearable to him. We are depending on this man's contributions, but he will go away."[*]

One time Śrīmat Sāra Mahārāja visited a professor's home in Purī to beg alms. He repeatedly glorified the professor's wife, saying, "You are just like Lakṣmī," and other blandishments. Both she and her husband were gratified and gave some rice, vegetables, and other items. When Śrīmat Sāra Mahārāja presented the collection to his guru and told where he had procured it, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura asked him, "Did you speak Hari-*kathā* there?" Śrīmat Sāra Mahārāja had to admit no. Disappointed, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura asserted that no offering should be received without reciprocal distribution of Hari-*kathā.* He further said, "A sadhu should go door to door glorifying Hari, taking *mādhukarī,* and accepting whatever alms householders offer according to their desire.[*] Don't praise the indwellers. Preach to them. Offerings taken otherwise will not be pure, and Kṛṣṇa will not accept them."[8]

Yet it could be that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura sometimes allowed questionable methods of collection, or perhaps was not always aware when his preachers stretched the truth. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda wrote:

> Some of my godbrothers... when we used to go out for begging some contribution from some big man, they used to say that my guru-*mahārāja* had lived for twelve years in the forest in a solitary place, living only on *tulasi* leaves. I could scarcely stop from laughing when I heard such a story, but it was effective to get the money and give to our guru-*mahārāja,* and he was pleased by our gift.[9]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would say, "Why flatter? State the plain truth without palavering. And if Kṛṣṇa is pleased, you will be successful and automatically money will

come." He used to say, "If you remain pure, so many rich men will fall down at your feet. Why should you go to them?" Lakṣmī, he said, always accompanies Nārāyaṇa and will provide for those who worship Him, so having this faith a sadhu should go on *mādhukarī-bhikṣā* without any ambition or anxiety and consider that whatever he receives is the Lord's mercy. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī himself embodied such conviction. He was not dependent on his adjunct preachers for supporting the Maṭha. He told them, "It is not that merely by wealth one can serve Godhead. If one has resolute determination to communicate Hari-*kathā* and serve the Lord, and if one's life is sincerely dedicated to His service, then everything will be accomplished. Don't worry about money. Money intoxicates, unless exclusively engaged in serving the Lord without a pinch of personal motivation."

In 1931 huge floods in Midnapore District destroyed many villages, killed countless people, and devastated crops and livestock. Famine followed. The survivors suffered heartrending shortages of rice, cloth, medicine, and other essential commodities. At that time the Gauḍīya Maṭha was collecting huge amounts for the upcoming Theistic Exhibition in Calcutta. This apparently unnecessary extravagence triggered fusillades of protest from prominent citizens: "Why are you spending for this exhibition when people need practical help?" Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura explained:

> Worse than the floods in Midnapore is the *bhava-sāgara.* My mission is to give relief to all living beings drowning in the *bhava-sāgara.* A famine of Hari-*kathā* is even worse than one of food. I am preaching to alleviate the famine of Hari-*kathā*. Caitanya Mahāprabhu ordered to do *para-upakāra*. *Para-upakāra* has two meanings: one is "to help others," and the other is "the topmost kind of help." There is no scarcity in the universe save that of *śuddha-bhakti.* Rather than trying to drag me into your mundane welfare activities, you should assist my efforts for *para-upakāra*. Let all the inhabitants of the world come to us. We shall provide them with food.[10]

In a speech during the Theistic Exhibition in Dacca, he described the actual alms that devotees should beg for:

> There are about forty-four lakh sadhus in India. What makes our sadhus different? As do other sadhus, our *maṭha-vāsīs* ask *bhikṣā* from the public. I am also begging *bhikṣā* from my disciples. I have assumed the responsibility for an important task, so I alone cannot go door to door begging. Hence I am sending disciples to do that. Go to broadcast Kṛṣṇa-*nāma,* by which the world will obtain the best benefit. And so that everyone may be engaged in Kṛṣṇa's service, take something, however slight, from each person.[11]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī clarified that a genuine sadhu going for collection is not a beggar, nor are the supposed donors givers; rather, the roles are reversed, for a sadhu gives the opportunity for service to those who should beg for such a chance. He exposed the mentality of motivated donors:

> Some people think that if they contribute, then our way of thinking should ditto theirs. Yet

> even if they give everything in the cosmos, we shall consider it like trash if the absolute truth cannot be wholly maintained, if we are expected to compromise in lieu of the donation. We do not want the support of such materialists.[12]

In an address to disciples, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī distinguished between genuine, spiritual begging for securing ingredients for Kṛṣṇa-*kīrtana,* and that of cheaters, and pointed out the common man's inability to distinguish the difference:

> Your collection by *bhikṣā* and that of those making a business of dharma externally appear exactly the same. They can temporarily create a false picture of selflessness and concern for others and thereby imitate your actions to avoid the public's criticism, and the public will be cheated by all such talk. But your seeing that is no reason to lose enthusiasm. The dressing of a chaste wife to please her husband and the charming display of a prostitute appear similar. The prostitute might seem even more expert and eager to please a man than does his chaste wife. But those who can discern inner motives will realize the great difference: one is exalted like the sky, whereas the other is subterranean low. One will be cheated if he attempts to evaluate the genuine Vaiṣṇavas or servants of the Lord only according to their external actions.[13]

When an outsider asked a Gauḍīya Maṭha sannyasi how much was deposited in their endowment fund, the sannyasi replied, "Nothing. Our guru-*mahārāja's* order is to not keep funds, but to take loans and then keep busy in preaching to requite the debts. He said that doing so will stoke the service mood, whereas keeping money in the bank will convert us into *mahāntas*."[*] Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura further elaborated, "Many persons advised me to make a will, but I shall not. If there is unadulterated service mood in the mission, then fearless broadcasting of the truth will continue; otherwise, let everything go to hell."[14]

Similarly, when Śrī Kīrtanānanda Brahmacārī asked Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī to establish an emergency fund for *maṭha-vāsīs,* he responded, "Go and preach, and if people are appreciative they will help you; otherwise not. Try to convince them that the path of Lord Caitanya is that of absolute and ultimate welfare for all living beings, as opposed to the ephemeral and incomplete help offered by mundane charitable groups. If you go just for money, it will merely be a profession. When you speak, people will question and examine you. You must answer clearly and thus spread the message of Lord Caitanya. If you try to satisfy the public for the purpose of collection, then you will make us into a *mahānta-maṭha*."[15]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura once declared that he wanted a lakh of paise. Shortly thereafter a donor tendered three lakh rupees to construct a temple. "That is alright," Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura commented, "but if one lakh of people had each given a paisa, all of them would have been blessed by performing service, rather than simply one man getting all the benefit."

Once Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was informed that two of his sannyasis had stated that he was dependent on their collections. During the lecture on the following morning, he told the devotees, "All of you stay inside for the next fifteen days and perform *kīrtana,* without going

for collection. By the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, Viṣṇupriyā, and Laksmīdevī I will maintain you. Without your going outside, various items will come to the Maṭha." The next day he himself went on *bhikṣā*. That day profuse victuals such as ghee, grains, and vegetables were brought unsolicited to the Maṭha. He ventured out for one day only, but the Maṭha continued to receive ample donations for the next fifteen days, while all the devotees remained there feeling rather ashamed.[16]

In the Gauḍīya Maṭhas, especially those situated in towns, the traditional system of *muṣṭi-dāna* was current, whereby well-wishers keep a special pot at home and each day before cooking put a fistful of rice therein for the local temple.[*] Similarly, several families pledged to regularly give fixed monetary contributions, usually small, which Maṭha *brahmacārīs* would collect within their prescribed areas. In this way, by taking a mite from each family, the needs of the Maṭha were covered and personal contact with supporters maintained. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura considered this method sattvic because it neither strained the donors nor incited sadhus to amass more than required.[17]

Śrīmad Bhakti Śrīrūpa Purī Mahārāja would perform traditional *bhikṣā* by begging door to door, receiving piecemeal offerings of coins, dal, vegetables, and rice. Once Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura took the objects collected in Śrīmat Purī Mahārāja's cloth and said, "This *bhikṣā* is sattvic; Gaurasundara is pleased."[18]

One time when the temple donation box was opened for counting, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura saw many spoiled, unusable coins inside. He quoted the Bengali proverb *kānā garu brāhmaṇake dāna* (to give a one-eyed cow to a brāhmaṇa)."[19]

During a preaching tour in Jessore District in 1920, while walking toward Solpur railway station Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī passed through a hamlet. An old woman standing by her one-room shack wanted to offer him something, yet by the time she had gathered a few items he had gone far ahead. Chasing behind, she tried to give the devotees one paisa and four limes, but despite her pleas the devotees did not accept her gift. Although he had not seen this incident and was out of earshot, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī turned around, came back, and with respect and appreciation received the woman's offering in his own hands. She then became entranced and fell at Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's feet. The devotees were amazed to see their guru's inconceivable mercy on her. As they resumed their journey, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī explained to the accompanying devotees the diverse types of charity described in *śāstra* and told them, "The Supreme Lord considers even a little gift from His devotees very great. Mahāprabhu would have been displeased if we had refused this old lady's expression of love for Him."

During the Gauḍa-maṇḍala Parikramā of 1925, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī walked with his attendant devotees the four miles from Ekacakra, Nityānanda Prabhu's birthplace, to the home of one Ṭhākura dāsa to heed his plea for an opportunity to serve Vaiṣṇavas. Thākura dāsa was so poor that his cloth barely covered his body, his residence could hardly accommodate two people sitting comfortably, and he appeared undernourished. Yet he had zealously begged

enough eatables to feed a party of over a hundred. Happier than if lodged in a king's palace, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī accepted *mahā-prasāda* from the hand of Ṭhākura dāsa in the open space in front of his hut.

Traditionally pious and inclined to give charity for religious causes, Marwaris were among the principal donors to Gauḍīya Maṭha activities, especially in Calcutta, where they comprised a significant community. But Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura cautioned not to accept much money from Marwaris.* Once Śrī Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī solicited a large donation from a wealthy Marwari businessman in Calcutta. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura turned it over to Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu and instructed, “Don't use it for purchasing food grains or anything else for the deity. Use it for legal or administrative work, because that man is a known sense enjoyer.” *

Twenty-two

Altruism and Charity

In Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's vision no one was rich or poor, for all were spirit souls. He compared ordinary commonweal activities, such as opening hospitals and schools, to saving the shirt of a drowning man, and declared:

> The thousands of *karmīs* who have opened innumerable hospitals, old age homes, centers for the poor, and schools, and the thousands of *jñānīs* who have undergone meditation and severe austerities, are insignificant compared to a single *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī* Vaiṣṇava once ringing the bell before the Lord's deity. This is not sectarianism, but plain truth. Atheists are wholly incapable of realizing this; thus they become either direct or indirect blasphemers of devotional service, or adherents to the doctrine of harmonistic all-inclusiveness.[1]

> Being averse to Lord Viṣṇu, countless *jīvas* have come to Mahā-māyā's dungeon to envy Lord Viṣṇu in countless ways. To deliver even one of them from Mahā-māyā's fortress and make him a devotee of Kṛṣṇa is unlimitedly better welfare work than the construction of countless hospitals and schools.[2]

To worldly altruists who put forward humanitarian welfare work as the highest good for suffering mankind, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī proposed:

> Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti* is the only way to deracinate miseries from the world. You are working only for the good of the body and treating the symptoms, not the original disease. Your patchwork schemes of various social, economic, and political ideologies are like blowing on a boil, which gives but a momentary and false sense of assuagement. The real cure is to lance the boil and squeeze out the pus. Similarly, the pus of material attachment must be excised by the sharp words of the expert devotee, the only genuine well-wisher of human society.[3]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī noted that "philanthropists are busy making arrangements for the sense gratification of human beings but do not know what constitutes legitimate welfare activities."[4] Describing mundane welfare work as ultimately injurious, being performed due to and keeping people in the bodily conception of life, which is opposed to their intrinsic self-interest, Gauḍīya Maṭha magazines regularly ran articles such as the September 1935 *Harmonist* piece "The Fraud Behind Altruism." Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī defined genuine altruism as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's unique *amandodayā dayā* (non-malefic mercy):[5*]

> There has not been and will not be such benefactors of the highest merit as Mahāprabhu and His devotees. The offer of other benefits is only a deception, indeed a great harm,

whereas the benefit done by Him and His followers is the truest and topmost eternal benefit. This benefit is not for one particular country causing mischief to another, but is benefic for the whole universe.[6]

He defined and analyzed true altruism:

Welfare work is good, but has two defects: it directly or indirectly encourages godlessness and supports violence to animals and other living entities. Whatever attempts we make to help others while neglecting the Divinity are useless.

Nor are we in favor of practicing spiritual life for any personal advantage. Those who want to utilize sadhus to accomplish something mundane demonstrate that they have no respect whatsoever for sadhus.

Ordinary altruism is not the goal of life. In the human form there is a much more important duty: to serve Bhagavān. Serving Bhagavān can permanently liberate people from their material distress and allow them to taste eternal happiness. Our intention is to convert the entire human population to practitioners of *bhakti.*

Serving Bhagavān is the soul's supreme eternal dharma. Hearing Śrī Caitanya-deva's teachings on this point will in all respects help everyone:

bhārata-bhūmite haila manuṣya janma yāra
janma sārthaka kari' kara para-upakāra

One who has taken birth as a human being in Bhārata-varṣa should make his life successful and work for the benefit of others. (Cc 1.9.41)

Śrī Caitanya-deva preached throughout the world for the welfare of all *jīvas,* yet the welfare work He proposed was not of the small-minded, paltry, stopgap, changeable, or imaginary, pie-in-the-sky type, like that envisaged by so-called social reformers and mundane philanthropists. The welfare work He proposed is of the highest caliber and neither temporary nor insignificant. The ways to uplift others—already invented, being invented, and about to be invented by ordinary human beings according to their narrow considerations—will in no way profit anyone, because they are all makeshift. Śrī Mahāprabhu revealed the actual means for elevating others:

vedyaṁ vāstavam atra vastu śivadaṁ tāpa-trayonmūlanam

Bhāgavata Purāṇa describes the actual subject of knowledge, which is auspicious and uproots the threefold miseries. (SB 1.1.2)

The process of doing good for others as described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* was discovered and refined by Śrī Caitanya-deva. This process destroys the threefold troubles, whereas

the usual forms of mundane welfare work imagined by thoughtful persons of this world are neither beneficial nor able to deliver the ultimate goal of life; they cannot even destroy material miseries.

Distresses are the effect of a particular cause. Until the cause is terminated, the effect will remain. Unless the root of a banyan tree is destroyed, it will again sprout even if one cuts down its trunk and branches thousands of times. The thousands of manmade proposals for social welfare are like an attempt to empty the ocean with one's bare hands; even if thousands of people engage continuously in such an endeavor for thousands of *yugas,* they will never be successful. By doing so they might cause a vast body of water to accumulate elsewhere. Similarly, we cannot empty the ocean of material suffering by our own strength. At most we will simply succeed in transferring the problems elsewhere. Of course by doing that we can certainly deceive others and even ourselves.

The threefold miseries cannot be vanquished without following the instructions of *Bhāgavatam*. There are unlimited varieties of distress, and we cannot invent a way to end even one of them. They are caused by nescience in the form of forgetfulness of the Supreme Lord. That nescience both covers the living entities and hurls them into further throes. Until we terminate the cause we will never overcome the miserable effect. If we wish to help others we must propagate devotional service. If the Lord's message is preached around the world, then all countries and all people will achieve the greatest success of all time.[7]

Devotional service benefits all beings in all countries at all times.[8] Those who chant the Lord's glories uplift every living entity on the planet, including beasts, birds, demigods, *asuras,* and even trees, creepers, and stones.[9]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī elaborated on this theme in a lecture at Krishnanagar Town Hall in June 1933:

We are approaching the intelligent section for preaching topics of ultimate value. One Mr. Roy was trying to uplift the slum conditions here and also wanted me to assist. But we don't support that. Let the world come up to whatever standard it may. In any case it will bring misfortune, for such altruism that is so constricted, temporary, and time-serving results only in having no time to attend to anything spiritual. One should not fill a hole with gold.[*] The well-known Christian professor Mr. MacDonald gave a lecture at Calcutta University on how altruism is the unique quality propounded in Christianity. Yet this conception should be enlarged and extended; extended altruism and theism are necessary. It should be considered how far man can help others by restricted altruism. Twenty-four hours pass by, but what type of help has been bestowed? You relieved some itch and nothing more? It should be seen who can give lasting benefit and by what method. Where is time for the mind to dwell on the temporary? Therefore we have no time for anything save Hari-*bhajana.*[10]

In this vein, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura exhorted his followers to perform genuine welfare activities:

> We must contemplate how everyone in the world can be benefited and take a firm vow to act for the welfare of ourselves and others, not just for people at the present time. We must endeavor for the eternal benefit of all people at all times. We must speak to everyone about the place that upon reaching one never leaves, the all-blissful kingdom of Vaikuṇṭha.[11]

A lawyer who was elaborately describing to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura the ashram he had founded for the deaf, dumb, and other unfortunates, ended with an appeal for a donation to help these handicapped persons become fit for work and eventually be able to earn their living. Extracts from the ensuing exchange follow.

[Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura:] Your purpose is high and meritorious, but due to being incomplete has been diverted. Altruism is good, but in two points is immensely faulty. First, directly or indirectly it promotes atheism; and included in this is violence to animals.[*]

[Lawyer:] If we are mindful to be spiritual, how can there be any fault?

[Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura:] You are opposed to the spiritual. Facilitating human sense enjoyment is not spiritual.

[Lawyer:] It is not our intention to provide them sense enjoyment, but simply to remove their mental deficiency.

[Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura:] What will they do if you remove their deficiency? And what is your purpose in attempting to do so?

[Lawyer:] So that they can be like normal people and take part in human society.

[Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura:] Simply so that they can live, or so that they can out of compassion arrange for the worldly comfort of themselves and a few others of their type? And how long will you do such charitable work?

[Lawyer:] Throughout life.

[Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura:] How long is life?

[Lawyer:] Those that come in my shelter can remain there as long as I live.

[Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura:] Karmic reactions are coming to you like the fawn coming to Bharata.[*] But if you think only of their [the ashram indwellers'] mental state while helping to keep their spiritual impulse asleep, then where is their real enlightenment? Your attempt is filling up the gaps. It is noble and generous; but any undertaking that discards theism has no

value. In my boyhood an experienced professor told me that those who try to help others actually harm them—which I have practically experienced at every step. If you help a dying snake by feeding it milk, it will suddenly strike and kill you. Often, public welfare projects do some good for a short time and seem truly glorious; but the reaction is really bad. Gandhi is trying for his countrymens' welfare, but among them one group is dissatisfied with him, and even some who previously much praised him now say differently. Contrarily, we do not have a changing opinion. People say that he respects *Gītā* and *Bhāgavata,* but his doing so is mundane or some kind of opportunism. We will never support engaging the spiritual for mundane opportunism. To attempt to engage sadhus in worldly service is not respect of their saintliness. The business of human life is not simply ordinary altruism—and if it is, then is it not like the life of orangutans?[12]

Confident that Kṛṣṇa would maintain all, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would respond to proponents of feeding the poor, "Let the whole city or the whole country come to us and become Vaiṣṇavas; we shall provide them with food." He also taught that one of the duties of Vaiṣṇavas, especially householders, is to give appropriate charity to the impoverished. He himself often offered alms to the poor, and that example was followed by his sannyasis. At the famous Sākṣi-gopāla temple near Purī, some beggars solicited alms from devotees accompanying him. Seeing his *gṛhastha* disciples refusing to proffer even a paisa, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī sat down to instruct them:

> "Money should not be granted to the poor and distressed, but kept for my imaginary worship of Kṛṣṇa. If it is given it will be *karma-kāṇḍa.*" This attitude of *gṛhasthas* expresses miserliness, mercilessness, and lack of compassion. Thus the heart becomes hard and attacked with niggardliness, and even the inclination to spend money for Viṣṇu's service, which is the means of one's own interest, disappears. Hence *sevāparādha* (offense in service) is invited.
>
> To save us from this kind of hypocritical and sinful mentality, Śrī Gaurasundara in His pastimes as a householder used to help lowly, suffering persons by giving them alms. Even money earned by our labor is obtained ultimately by the mercy of Godhead. It is not an incorrect use of wealth if some portion of that mercy is awarded to requesting poor people; this is its proper use. To distribute *prasāda* is the compulsory duty of *gṛhastha* Vaiṣṇavas. Even though their woebegone condition is a corollary of their own karma, the impoverished are still the Supreme Lord's creatures; therefore, to help them is the duty of the well-to-do. At the same time, to think of the poor as Nārāyaṇa is only blindness to truth, and a great offense. Vaiṣṇava householders are not renunciants, monists, or worldly materialists. To learn how to satisfy the senses of Kṛṣṇa, they should follow the ideal of the lotus feet of a guru firmly situated in the Vedas and the Supreme Spirit. Just as *gṛhasthas* maintain as God's people their wife, children, and relatives even if not devotees of Kṛṣṇa, so too should householders help the deprived and distressed.[13]

During Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's Vyāsa-*pūjā* celebrations, hundreds of needy people were

given uncooked rice, cloth, and other such gifts, and on certain other festival days there would be *kāṅgāla-bhojana* (feeding the poor). With a little encouragement from the devotees who were distributing, the indigents gustily chanted the holy names and "*Jaya* Prabhupāda!" as they honored *mahā-prasāda.*

Whenever Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī visited temples, he would offer grains, fruit, or cloth to the deities, or at least put some money in the donation box. He also gave small monetary contributions to beggars who lived there. And after staying in the home of any rich man, he would give a little baksheesh to the servants who had attended him and his party.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's practice, which he told his disciples to emulate, was to give paise to Vraja *pāṇḍās* even if not taking their help; when crossing rivers, to give the boatmen a little more than the standard fare; and to treat hired laborers courteously and pay them well.

Nevertheless, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's generosity and compassion for the disadvantaged was honed with a conviction that they could be truly benefited only by accepting *śuddha-bhakti:*

> We shall offer such aid as food and clothes to whoever has faith in Godhead and has begun devotional service. We should feed and clothe the poor and provide them other benefits in order to make them serve Hari. Otherwise, what is the use of nourishing a snake with milk and bananas? That is not kindness; rather, it entraps people in *māyā.*[14] *

Ālālanātha Artashram

In Ālālanātha Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura established an ashram for lepers who had taken to *śuddha-bhakti.* That most lepers were from the ranks of the socially backward, the malnourished, and the unclean, compounded the stigma against them based on the prevalent misconception that leprosy is highly infectious, and on *śāstrīya* descriptions of its being a reaction for previous grave sins. However, the *Harmonist* pointed out that such leprous devotees were unlimitedly more fortunate than the physically able who lacked *śuddha-bhakti,* and that the service-oriented attitude of those apparently diseased devotees was the key not just to their gaining relief from the gross affliction of leprosy, but for all persons to overcome all types of misery:

> The inmates of the local leper colony came in due course to learn about the teaching of Mahāprabhu from the preachers of Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha. A few discharged lepers have offered their service to Śrī Brahma Gauḍīya Maṭha at Ālālanātha and have been permitted to organize an Artashram for the purpose.[†]
>
> Ālālanātha Artashram is not a colony of discharged lepers trying by the method of cooperation to improve their material body and mind. They have no such purpose. They have in view the benefit of their souls and their methods are in entire conformity with their purpose. They have offered to serve Śrī Brahma Gauḍīya Maṭha in the same manner as the devotees residing at the Maṭha.
>
> The spirit of service that prevails among the inmates of Ālālanātha Artashram deserves to be made known to the public as affording a clue to the nature of the solution of the manifold evils of our mortal sojourn that is offered by the teaching of Mahāprabhu. The members of the Artashram have settled on the outskirts of the village on a few acres of wasteland belonging to the Maṭha and have taken to agriculture and horticulture. Their activities are dedicated to the service of Kṛṣṇa under the guidance of the devotees of Śrī Brahma Gauḍīya Maṭha. They follow voluntarily the rules of devotional life that are observed at the Maṭha. They participate in the services of the Maṭha and attend to discourses on the teaching of the Supreme Lord from the lips of devotees of the Maṭha by humbly avoiding personal contact with other persons. During their leisure they talk about what they have heard, and study or read aloud to themselves devotional books in Oriya and Bengali that are approved by the mission.
>
> They are not ambitious of social uplift. They are content to serve the devotees in the spirit of unreserved humility and complete submission. This spirit is incomprehensible to those who do not possess their purity of trust in Mahāprabhu. The members of the Artashram are grateful to the devotees of the Maṭha for arranging their effective segregation from the rest of the world and are in a position to realize the mercy of Mahāprabhu for accepting their unique method of service. They have been relieved of all thoughts of their poverty, disease, and other physical hardships through their accepted service of the Supreme Lord.

They not only do not grumble, but are unspeakably grateful to the devotees of the Maṭha for providing them the chance of service.

Their behavior to one another is on the ideal of the Maṭha. No one among them wishes to receive any personal service on one's own account from another; but, at the same time, everyone is anxious to serve others in their service of Mahāprabhu. Their organization is based upon the principle of spiritual service. They accept the service of others only when they are commanded by the devotees of the Maṭha to accept such service. They welcome all kinds of hardship for the service of the mission, being in a position to realize that such trials afford them the opportunity of learning to serve the Lord without any expectation of return in any mundane shape.

No member of the Artashram would like to exchange his condition for that of any other person, either prince or peasant, of this world. Every member only prays to be kept constantly employed in the service of the Lord and His devotees.

The article further underlined how the Ālālanātha Artashram demonstrated the spiritual altruism that was the *raison d'être* of the Gauḍīya Maṭha:

There is categorical distinction between the popular conception of altruism and the service that is rendered to all souls for their lasting benefit by pure devotees of Mahāprabhu. A person who loves a leper or studies the cure of leprosy forgetful of his duty to the soul, that is characteristic of empiric science, thereby commits an act of malice against his own soul as well as the soul of the person whom he wants to help. This is unfortunately a revolutionary statement as things go nowadays, but is fully entertainable if the facts of our ordinary experience are viewed in the light of the teaching of the *śāstras* as illustrated by the career of Mahāprabhu.

Kindness to the body and mind is cruelty to the soul. The soul's concerns are thereby suppressed by the hostile claims of the body and mind. But we should really be concerned only about our souls. We should be interested in the body and mind for the sake of the soul.

The service of Mahāprabhu is open to all persons through the service of His pure devotees who bear no malice to anyone. The devotees of Mahāprabhu are neither altruists or ascetics who practice malice against the soul of man by wilfully pandering to the needs of the material body and mind which are opposed to the requirements of the soul. The realization and active service of this truth can alone restore peace and contentment to our souls during our mundane sojourn.[15]

Twenty-three

Coping with Thieves

Around 1913 a hired *brāhmaṇa* from Orissa by the name of Kṛṣṇa Pūjārī was engaged in deity service at the Yogapīṭha. Once in the middle of the night he suddenly ran shrieking to Vrajapattana, where he sobbingly recounted to Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī that in a dream Mahāprabhu in the form of Nṛsiṁha-deva had straddled his chest and told him, "You stole from My donation box! Run! Get out from My house right now or I'll destroy you!" The priest started wailing and rolling on the ground, and despite all attempts could not be pacified. But after some time he rose and set out for Calcutta, and then returned to his home. Although two months' salary was due him, he refused to accept even a paisa.

When at Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha a hired *brāhmaṇa* cook was caught trying to steal a can of oil, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura told him, "You are a *brāhmaṇa* serving the Lord. It is not good to steal items meant for His service. Because you are a *brāhmaṇa* I can give you a tin of oil, but don't take that which we have offered in service to Godhead." He gave a little money to the cook, who thereupon returned the oil, thus being saved from a grave offense.

When a *pūjārī* at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha was apprehended stealing the deity's ornaments Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī told him, "You should not remain dressed as a sadhu." He instructed his disciples to feed that *brahmacārī* sumptuously and send him home.[1*]

Many times Muslims from nearby villages snitched fruit, flowers, or vegetables from the garden of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī became upset at such pilfering of items meant to be offered to the Lord, but rather than getting personally involved, had his disciples deal with the miscreants. Or sometimes he told his men to give the offenders a plate of fruit or a *ḍāb* and send them away.[2†]

One night before the *tirobhāva-mahotsava* of Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī, a local Muslim gang raided Śrī Caitanya Maṭha and made off with a large basket of mangos from the storeroom. Vinoda Bihārī Prabhu caught one of them, tied him up, and next morning brought him before Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī—who ordered his release and told Vinoda Prabhu, "You have committed an offense. They came for *prasāda,* and anything in our storeroom may be considered *prasāda*. Now bring ten baskets of mangos and personally take them to their village." Vinoda Prabhu spent the entire remainder of the day fulfilling that order.

Yet Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was not always so lenient with those who stole from the Maṭha. One time after a thief was arrested for stealing coconuts, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura himself attended the court hearing and pleaded, "He should be punished fittingly. He has stolen from Bhagavān." [3]

Often monkeys swiped vegetables and fruit from the garden of Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha. Śrīla

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī kept a watchful eye, and when monkeys came he would shout Hare Kṛṣṇa to scare them away.

Twenty-four

Regarding Women

As the exemplar sannyasi and *ācārya,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was particularly strict in dealings with women. He would meet females only if they were accompanied by their husband or a son. He tended to deal with women formally rather than affectionately, even they be his *śiṣyās* or relatives.* Nonetheless, he sometimes gave extensive personal instructions to female devotees by letter.

Once while Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was sitting with a few disciples in his room at Ultadingi Road, one of his sisters entered. After a short exchange she left, whereupon he asked those disciples why they had not restrained her from coming. And when Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was once visited by his aged mother and a sister in her fifties, and the only other male disciple present got up to leave the room, Śrīla Sarasvatī restrained him, saying, "Do you want me to fall down?"

Many years later Śrī O.B.L. Kapoor's wife, a *harināma śiṣyā* of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, requested to speak alone with him. Although old enough to be her grandfather, he refused: "Whatever you have to say, you may say in the company of others."[1] And when Śrī Nafar-candra Pal Chaudhuri once brought his sexagenarian mother to meet Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, she was turned back: "Mother, stay downstairs. Send your son to meet me."

As His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda commented, "Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja did not very much like preaching amongst women."[2]

Typical of a renunciant within the Vedic tradition, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī often quoted verses from *śāstra* specifying the dangers of *strī-saṅga,* association with women—for instance, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 9.19.17:

> *mātrā svasrā duhitrā vā nāviviktāsano bhavet*
> *balavān indriya-grāmo vidvāṁsam api karṣati*
>
> One should not sit close to his mother, daughter, or sister, because the senses are so strong that they can agitate the mind of even a learned person.

In his commentary on *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* 1.1.29, he wrote extensively about the perils of associating both with women and those attached to women. Profusely citing *śāstra,* he warned that such mixing is the cause of downfall and the gateway to hell for aspiring transcendentalists.

Privately, among male disciples, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura sometimes referred to the deviousness characteristic of muliebral nature as described in *śāstra.** It was not that he was against

womankind, for he expounded on the spiritual equality of all living beings, whatever their outward covering, admonishing that to overly harp on the dangers of *strī-saṅga* might increase rather than decrease the fascination for womanly charms, the binding force in material existence. Furthermore, he clarified that scriptural norms prescribing gender segregation did not constitute a blanket indictment of females, but rather of the perverted mentality prevalent in the world:

> Sannyasis and *brahmacārīs* are forbidden to see women. Yet it is not intelligent to on that basis think badly of all femininity. What is meant by "seeing women" is judging them as objects of sense enjoyment; that kind of seeing is reprehensible. There is no fault in the phenomenon, but in the attitude or behavior toward it. There is nothing bad in all the diversity of the world, yet misuse of its objects is blameworthy. If the varieties of the world are engaged in serving Bhagavān, that is quite acceptable.[3]

"Sex," a forthrightly titled *Harmonist* article of January 1936 that examined trends toward the social emancipation of women, opened:

> The relationship between the sexes cannot be placed on a satisfactory basis without reference to the Absolute. The modern woman in Europe and America is anxious to have full liberty of action limited only by the conditions of mundane existence. This necessity for adaptation to the mundane environment is a very large reservation on individual liberty and perhaps exercises the decisive influence on the aspirations and modes of activity of every mortal, including women.
>
> The modern woman is seeking, above all things, economic equality with man by enlarging the scope of her occupations. There is no field of human labor into which she is not entering on a footing of equal partnership with men. There may even come a day, perhaps very much sooner than many people imagine, when woman workers will be preferred to men in most branches of human industry, thus reversing the past arrangement.
>
> Under the circumstances will it not be regarded as an extinguisher of the cherished hopes of the fair sex to advance the view that the sexes should be segregated from each other, which clearly requires also demarcation of the respective spheres of activity of the sexes? Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya condemns all association between the sexes for carnality in the most unsparing terms. Is this teaching of the *śāstras* to be regarded as obsolete and oriental in view of the immemorial practice of Western countries as well as the most modern tendencies all over the world that are rapidly sweeping away all barriers to unreserved association of the sexes? If women take over the work that is being performed by men all over the world, will not such change obliterate the last obstacles in the way of the fellowship of the sexes on a footing of perfect equality? Will it also lead to sexual intemperance and moral and eugenic disasters?
>
> This is not regarded as likely by those who believe in the natural goodness of the white races, who are the pattern of modern humanity, and the proved sobering effects of

individual liberty in the case of white men. It is the basic maxim of modern radicalism that the more complete the responsibility that is thrown upon the shoulders of a human being, the lesser be chance of his or her physical or mental degradation.

Liberty is supposed by the moderns to be the panacea for all the ills that the flesh is heir to. The tendency towards full liberty is very clearly illustrated by the modern attitude towards the institution of marriage. Modern women and men are developing an increasing repugnance for the obligations of the married state. Free sexual intercourse at the option of the parties is on the point of scoring an unqualified victory over the old superstition of the inviolability of the marriage vow.

Both man and woman are nowadays claiming perfect freedom of sexual relationship. This is necessary if both sexes are to have equal liberty of action. It does not follow that such liberty will be necessarily abused. The modern expectation is that it will make the conditions of sexual relationship better and more reasonable. Such being the modern ideal, is not the teaching of the Supreme Lord contrary to the best hopes of the race?

The question from the worldly point of view hinges on the actual mundane result of sex liberty. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya is against sexual intercourse between man and woman who are not husband and wife. He is against man and woman who are not husband and wife meeting by themselves in privacy. He cites with approval the text of the *śāstras* that it is not possible even for the wise to stand against the seductions of the flesh. There is a radical school of thought in favor of admitting the practice of carnality as a matter of right and source of wellbeing. They hope that licensed carnality can alone effectively curb sexual excess. This view is not endorsed by Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, who declares that the carnal propensity increases by sexual freedom.

Although women were welcome to visit for *darśana* and other functions, the standard decorum of restricting association between females and sadhus was rigidly observed. During lectures and similar proceedings, men and women sat well apart on separate large rugs, often hidden from each other by a bamboo screen, by which also the speaker (inevitably male) could neither see nor be seen by the opposite gender. Śrī O.B.L. Kapoor recalled that his wife received *harināma* from behind such a screen, and it may be inferred that this was Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's standard practice for initiating females. Women were not allowed in the deity kitchen, it being considered an extension of the altar, although some older women were permitted to assist in cooking for devotees. During festivals, when much assistance was required, women could render miscellaneous services, yet safeguards were enforced to uphold the policy of segregating the sexes as far as possible.

Gauḍīya Maṭha journals sparsely mentioned individual women, they being mainly absent from public life and having very little or no personal interaction with genuine sadhus. And while several educated ladies from aristocratic families were proud to be counted among Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's disciples, neither he nor any of his male associates encouraged them to take a direct role in the mission. A few Gauḍīya Maṭha men influenced by “progressive” ideas

opined that female devotees be allowed a more substantial role, but Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was not for it. They were expected to practice *bhakti* while observing the traditional scripturally ordained role of women as chaste wives and mothers, and could also preach among other females whom they contacted in course of domestic activities. And philosophical writing by female devotees was both appreciated and encouraged.[*] For instance, the *Gauḍīya* announced a women's essay competition on the subject "*Sādhvī mahilāra hari-sevā*" (Devotional service by saintly women). Entries were to be submitted by post, and a Ṣaṣṭhī-devī locket would be conferred on the author of the composition adjudged the best.[4†]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura respectfully referred to and addressed women according to *śāstra* and tradition as *mā* or *mātā* (mother), rather than the more familiar *didi* (sister), preferred by modernists and Vaiṣṇava groupings less cautious about sexual discrepancies. He mostly discouraged women from renouncing their families, as evinced in an answer published in *Gauḍīya* to a query on this topic:

> The *sannyāsa-āśrama* is not suitable for women. Performing Hari-*bhajana* while remaining at home will bestow auspiciousness upon them. In the name of giving women *sannyāsa, bhek,* and so on, much disturbance exists in the world. Imitation of exceptional cases is not advisable. Persons wishing to have detailed knowledge of *bhek* and related topics may see *Saṁskāra-dīpikā,* by Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī Prabhupāda.[5]

Although Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī accepted some unwed girls as *śiṣyās,* he expected them to observe the stringent social convention that all females marry. And in those cases it was understood that the maiden was taking *harināma* at her own risk, for if her parents were later to betrothe her to a man unfavorable to her practice of *bhakti,* she would nonetheless be obliged to attempt to persevere.[*] One such example was Śrīmatī Bhavatāriṇī dāsī, a sister of Śrī Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu. She was given *harināma* by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī despite being wed to a drunkard and fish-eater, whom she faithfully served throughout his life while still maintaining her devotional practices. But when Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī observed that many of his female disciples could not become fixed in *bhakti* due to bad family association, he proposed a sequestered residence for them to peacefully perform *bhajana:*

> We now have *maṭhas* at many places, whereat numerous sannyasis, *gṛhasthas,* and *brahmacārīs* have facility to reside and receive training in *sadācāra,* yet for a long time we have also been trying to provide the mothers similar opportunities for Hari-*bhajana.* Of course those mothers who have the opportunity for Hari-*bhajana* in their own homes do not need a separate residence. But we often hear that they get impeded in their Hari-*bhajana* due to bad association. It will be highly beneficial for them if we can build Śrī Viṣṇupriyā-pallī in Śrīdhāma Māyāpur, near the abode of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, wherein they can live apart from their families and perform Hari-*bhajana.* They belong to the group of Śrī Viṣṇupriyā-devī, so it is proper that they live in the house of Śrīman Mahāprabhu and serve Him under the shelter of Śrī Viṣṇupriyā-devī. There should not be any bad association or mundane male relationship for them. Only a few devotees who are

like Īśāna should stay at a distance and take care of them.[†] If the mothers do not quarrel, and live only for the sake of serving the Lord—by daily reciting *śāstra* and discussing devotional subjects, always chanting the holy name, taking care of the paraphernalia for Śrīman Mahāprabhu's service, giving up all luxury, living a model saintly life, and serving Mahāprabhu in all ways—then it is necessary to have such an ideal neighborhood.[6]

However, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī pointed out the despicable situation in Kuliyā, where ashrams founded for women in the name of dharma had become virtual brothels. And after Viṣṇupriyā-pallī was established in a back corner of the Yogapīṭha compound as a small dwelling for widows, he wrote:

> Viṣṇupriyā-pallī in Śrīdhāma Māyāpur is required. But it is unfitting to have a place in Māyāpur for persons who give up traversing the path of Śrī Viṣṇupriyā and resort to independence. There was no disturbance as long as you were engaged like a father or son in making arrangements for Viṣṇupriyā-pallī. The lady devotees should serve Mahāprabhu by following the example of Śrī Viṣṇupriyā, and not take to their own independent ways.[7]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura advised his male disciples to cultivate a transcendental outlook toward females:

> Please perceive everything of this world as ingredients for serving Kṛṣṇa, for all is actually meant for Kṛṣṇa's service. View all womankind as beloved consorts of Kṛṣṇa and help them to engage constantly in His service. Do not consider them objects of your sense enjoyment. They are to be enjoyed by Kṛṣṇa, never by the minute *jīva*.[8]

Twenty-five

Mahā-prasāda

Definition

In accordance with *śāstra,* Gauḍīya Maṭha members generally referred to Kṛṣṇa *prasāda* as *mahā-prasāda:*

> *kṛṣṇera ucchiṣṭa haya 'mahā-prasāda' nāma*
> *'bhakta-śeṣa' haile 'mahā-mahā-prasādākhyāna'*
>
> The remnants of food offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa are called *mahā-prasāda.* After this same *mahā-prasāda* has been taken by a devotee, the remnants are known as *mahā-mahā-prasāda.* (Cc 3.16.59)

Thus devotees referred to individual preparations as *anna* (rice) *mahā-prasāda,* dal *mahā-prasāda,* and so on. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura stated that the real or best food for the *jīva* is *mahā-mahā-prasāda.*

He explained the theology of *mahā-prasāda:*

> A person whose body and mind have been accepted by the Lord is privileged to approach Him with offerings of food and drink. The Lord is pleased to accept food offered by such persons. By His acceptance, the food is spiritualized in the same way that the body and mind are spiritualized by dedication to the Lord. This dedication of all food to the Lord is true renunciation of all material foodstuffs. Foods accepted by the Lord are spiritualized and changed into *mahā-prasāda,* "the great blessing." The sadhu accepts *mahā-prasāda* not for the purpose of appeasing hunger, nor for acquiring bodily or mental health or strength, nor for any other worldly purpose, but with the objective to thereby be enabled to avoid the traps laid for him—sensuous temptations of all kinds, including that of eating—during his sojourn in this sphere. By honoring *mahā-prasāda* in that spirit he obtains the inclination for devotional service to the Lord. Therefore, honoring *mahā-prasāda* is different from eating, although to the uninitiated both may seem identical. The external form appears to remain the same, while the nature of the activity is fundamentally changed. The result is that, whereas sensuous inclination is strengthened by mere eating, gluttony and its attendant vices are radically cured by honoring *mahā-prasāda.*
>
> *Mahā-prasāda* literally means "the great favor." The beneficial result for the soul by honoring *mahā-prasāda* is also available to the bound *jīva.* The Lord does not accept food offered by the bound *jīva,* but if the bound *jīva* honors *mahā-prasāda,* his self is benefited. Food offered by sadhus to the Lord is categorically different from ordinary food. To take ordinary food is harmful for the soul, yet by honoring *mahā-prasāda,* not only is the soul saved from the bad effect of eating, but it is positively benefited by obtaining the inclination for spiritual service. Therefore the *śāstras* enjoin us to give up eating, and to honor *mahā-prasāda*. "If the palate is conquered, every other sense is conquered." We can never be freed from the attraction of sensuous temptations until we altogether

renounce eating and learn to honor *mahā-prasāda*. By honoring *mahā-prasāda* our sensuousness diminishes and ultimately disappears; only then may we understand the real meaning of the *śāstras.*

The sadhu helps the fallen *jīva* to regain his natural state of freedom from sin and of constant service to the Lord, by bringing about descent of transcendental sound in the form of words uttered by his lips, and also by giving *mahā-prasāda* in the shape of food offered by him to the Lord. The sound pronounced by the sadhu and *mahā-prasāda* are not entities of this world. They are not identical with ordinary sound or ordinary food, which are merely means for gratifying our sensuous inclinations and appetites. Because they are spiritual, the word of God and *mahā-prasāda* cannot be enjoyed, or in other words, cannot be employed in gratification of the senses. Those who enjoy *kīrtana* or any spiritual discourse, or eat *mahā-prasāda* for appeasing hunger or gratification of the palate, are guilty of sacrilegious acts that serve only to prolong the state of sin, and ignorance of the greatest possible calamity that can befall the soul embodied in human form.[1]

Diet

Discussions about the preferred foods of a *mahā-bhāgavata* should not lead one to adjudge him an ordinary person whose likes and dislikes are dictated by the modes of material nature. A pure devotee is devoid of mundane exploitive spirit; his enjoyment of *mahā-prasāda* is of a wholly different nature than the perverted sensual pleasure of conditioned souls. A pure devotee's happiness is based on, nondifferent from, and wholly infused with an intrinsic attitude of service to his worshipable Lord. This transcendental existence is reality for those who experience it, and worshipable for those who aspire for it, yet remains ever inconceivable to persons whose outlook is perverted by deep envy of Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's appetite for Hari-*kathā* certainly surpassed his desire for food, so much so that while immersed in such talk, if reminded that it was mealtime he would become annoyed. Often, being deeply absorbed in thoughts of Kṛṣṇa, he quickly finished eating, taking his meal only as a formality.

Beginning from receiving Jagannātha's remnants when just an infant, throughout his life Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura took only *mahā-prasāda* as his food. He carefully honored *mahā-prasāda,* touching it with only the tips of his fingers—as did all Hindus, he ate with his fingers—and with such reverence that his eating resembled prayer.

His diet consisted of the same fare dear to Lord Caitanya—standard Bengali favorites—yet he preferred food cooked in cow ghee or sesame oil rather than in the mustard oil intrinsic to Bengali cuisine. His exiguous intake of rice (not more than four to five pounds per month) also differed from that of most Bengalis, who often consume rice in heaps.

At around seven o'clock each morning, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would take a light breakfast, one favorite item being *ciḍā-bhāji* (crispy fried flat-rice). At around ten-thirty, shortly after the *bhoga* offering to the temple deities was completed, he would take a full meal. It was prepared separately, and he would personally offer it to the Govardhana-*śilā* kept on his table. This repast consisted mainly of rice, with *śāk* (spinach), other vegetable preparations, and dal as accompaniments. He would squeeze fresh lime juice over the items and then sample a small portion of each. He generally also took a purīe of boiled green papaya, as a liver tonic and digestive aid.

In the afternoon, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī usually drank lime sherbet or the water of *ḍāb.* Occasionally he also took a snack, especially liking *ālu-ciḍā* (flat-rice fried with spices and ghee, mixed with pieces of fried potato), or fried peanuts or chickpeas, heavily salted and with *hing* (asafoetida). He was fond of both *hing* and salt. Indeed, he liked food so saliferous that many disciples found it difficult to taste his remnants. Yet he would honor the *mahā-prasāda* of temple deities without adding ghee, salt, or anything else.

Around eight-thirty to nine in the evening, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would drink a glass

of hot, lightly sweetened milk. Although mostly he did not eat at night, he sometimes took a small plate of shallow-fried potatoes or other vegetables, along with a few *lucis*.[*]

Normally Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's meals were served by Sajjana Mahārāja, his cook and personal assistant; but if Sajjana Mahārāja happened to be ill, then others, such as Svādhikārānanda Brahmacārī, would cook and serve. Sajjana Mahārāja would also regularly distribute his guru-*mahārāja's* remnants—but only to those who had received *harināma*. Despite the saltiness of the fare, Sajjana Mahārāja would need to cook extra to fulfil the considerable demand for remnants. Sometimes Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would ask Sajjana Mahārāja, "Who took the chewed *sajanā?*" or "Who took the sweet?"—and thus be informed which disciples honored his remnants out of a purely devotional sentiment and which chose only the tastier items.[†]

In Bengal, vegetables tend to be succulent due to the fertile soil nourished by profuse rain, and in some parts also by regular floods. Bengalis typically prepare those vegetables simply, lightly frying them in a little oil or ghee and then steaming them to bring out their natural flavor. Such preparations were dear to Lord Caitanya, and Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura also was fond of them. He particularly relished tender *sajanā* and several other Bengali vegetables that city dwellers generally consider rustic and unsophisticated, such as wild *śāk* and roots.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī also appreciated the Bengali favorites *nīma-begun, lāphrā, bhuni khicaḍi,* and *ḍhākāi khicaḍi,* all of which were regular fare in the Gauḍīya Maṭha. *Nīma-begun* is eggplant stir-fried along with (bitter) neem leaves. *Lāphrā* consists of many vegetables boiled together then spiced with fried cumin, black pepper, and mustard seeds. *Khicaḍi* is rice and dal cooked together. *Bhuni khicaḍi* is thick and dry. *Ḍhākāi khicaḍi* (semi-liquid *khicaḍi* with plenty of vegetables and ginger) was a standard at festivals, for which it was prepared in large brass pots.[*] After the celebrations, leftovers were covered and kept overnight, during which the grains would absorb the liquid, resulting in a more solid mixture, and the flavor of the spices would become further pronounced. *Ḍhākāi khicaḍi* was a great favorite of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's, even more than opulent preparations like *puṣpānna* (fried rice with nuts and raisins).

In most Gauḍīya Maṭhas, milk sweets were purchased daily for the deities.[†] In Māyāpur, first-class *rasagullās* were brought each day from a shop in Svarupganj, and for mass distribution during festivals were delivered in dozens of big clay pots. Among Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's preferred sweet preparations were *rasagullās* from a particular shop in Bāg-bazar and sweet *samosās*.

Among non-Bengali items, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura particularly liked the South Indian favorite *rasam* (a sour and spicy digestive soup taken with rice), and also the unique flavor of chapatis cooked over a cow-dung fire.

Following the etiquette of bringing a gift when going to see a sadhu, visitors often brought mangos for Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī—but true to his childhood vow, he would not eat

them.[‡] He would instead give them to disciples, saying, "I am an offender. I cannot accept this." Yet he would accept preparations made from unripe mango, and especially liked chutney made thereof.

Daily fare for *maṭha-vāsīs* was plain—rice, dal, and cooked vegetables. Spicing was light and chili not used, although a considerable quantity of salt was added. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura discouraged *brahmacārīs* from drinking much milk, lest it disturb their continence; usually it was allowed only for the sick.

Mustard oil was the standard cooking medium, but due to its strong flavor it is unsuitable for sweet preparations and certain fried items, such as puris, all of which were therefore prepared with ghee.

Cooking pots in the Maṭhas were made of brass or bell metal. *Mahā-prasāda* was served on plates made from leaves, stone, or brass. Preaching parties traveled with their own pots, plates, and other cooking utensils.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would joke: "Anyone not taking *urad* dal must secretly be eating fish."[*] Although Bengalis are known to be fond of fish, those who joined the Mission were of course required to abstain. But in Bengal, *urad* dal is commonly prepared as *baḍī* (fried balls made from a paste of ground *urad* dal and spices), which tastes quite like fish and was popular in the Gauḍīya Maṭha—hence the quip.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura emphasized the importance of distributing *mahā-prasāda,* particularly for benefiting the less educated, who had little inclination for highly philosophical discourses. While *mahā-prasāda* was being distributed he would go among the partakers and ask, "Have you taken to your satisfaction?" "Are you getting enough?" "Is it cooked well?"

He also stated:

> We have to force-feed *prasāda* to persons full of *anarthas.* Those who have no interest in spiritual life should be given *prasāda,* by taking which they will gradually attain *kaniṣṭha-adhikāra.* When in the presence of persons who have no inclination for *bhakti,* a devotee should while chanting mantras offer some food to Kṛṣṇa and then give them the *prasāda.*[2]

Selectiveness

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī explained that in the vision of an *uttama-adhikārī* the entire world is *prasāda,* so there are no dietary restrictions for him; nonetheless, a pure devotee prefers to take *mahā-prasāda* that was properly prepared and offered to Kṛṣṇa.[†] He elucidated:

> The service of cooking is meant for Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His devotees like the Vraja-*gopīs* who uttered *geham juṣām,* etc.; and cooking should be done as far as possible by the *dīkṣita,* inasmuch as it forms part of *arcana.*[‡] A devotee is the co-sharer of Kṛṣṇa's remnants.[3]

Accordingly, even when visiting and lodging at homes of pious people eager to feed him, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī almost always honored only *mahā-prasāda* cooked by his initiated disciples. At the home of a zamindar in Midnapore District, rather than accept the dainty viands offered, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī told his host, "First you must follow my advice. If I cannot benefit you then why should I take anything from you?" Vedic etiquette enjoins that even an uninvited or ordinary guest, not to speak of a saintly one, must be served as well as possible; and it was considered extremely inauspicious if a sadhu who had come to one's home did not eat. After Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had fasted for a day, the landlord, who along with his whole household was plunged in much anxiety, begged for initiation.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura did not eat in the homes of non-vegetarians, even when his own men were available to cook. Because in Bengal and Orissa almost everyone—including supposed Vaiṣṇavas—eats fish, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was cautious not to go to villages where there was neither a home of vegetarians nor a temple where food could be prepared purely. Nor did he like to reside in the home of or take food cooked by vegetarians if they were staunch *smārtas,* or adherents of other paths inconsistent with *śuddha-bhakti.*

Occasionally Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura honored meals of *mahā-prasāda* from recognized Viṣṇu temples—for instance, at the Gopālajī *maṭha* in Cuttack when he stayed for six days to lecture on *Śikṣāṣṭaka.* While there, he observed the custom of Gopālajī *maṭha* to take *mahā-prasāda* while squatting, rather than sitting on the floor, and with the left hand held behind the back.

Before honoring Jagannātha *mahā-prasāda* from Purī, often brought by disciples and others, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would perform *daṇḍavat* and circumambulate it three times.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī flayed the deity worship conducted in many rich men's households as merely a pretentious ploy for the indwellers to pamper their tongue in the name of *prasāda.* He declared that in such homes there is neither real worship nor a real deity. He forbad his disciples from visiting the wealthy simply to enjoy fancy food in the name of *mahā-prasāda.*[4]

Although only professional *brāhmaṇa* cooks were engaged to prepare *mahā-prasāda* for mass distribution at Gauḍīya Maṭha festivals, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura did not like to take food prepared by such hired men. Yet he gave an even finer understanding to devotees traveling with him en route to Purī in 1918, after some had purchased yogurt and then discarded it upon learning that it was made by persons of sinful habits. To edify them he quoted:

> *'dvaite' bhadrābhadra-jñāna, saba—'manodharma'*
> *'ei bhāla, ei manda'—ei saba 'bhrama'*
>
> In the material world, concepts of good and bad are all mental speculations. Therefore to say "This is good, that is bad" is a mistake. (Cc 3.4.176)

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura averred that, notwithstanding purity of food being a major

consideration in traditional Indian society, *smārta* standards of purity and impurity or acceptable and rejectable do not apply to items meant for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure. He elaborated how materialists' offerings can never be *mahā-prasāda,* whereas food presented by true devotees, even if not offered according to standard rituals or if deemed unofferable, is indubitably *mahā-prasāda.*[5] [*]

Demonstrating recognition that *mahā-prasāda* is fully spiritual and can never be contaminated, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī once ate from a pile of thrown-out remnants that had been rummaged through by dogs.[6] Similarly, when devotees at an Annakūṭa festival were reluctant to partake of the hill of rice *prasāda* because a dog had eaten therefrom, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī asked where it had eaten and then honored a handful of rice from that very spot.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura once related an anecdote illustrating the correct attitude toward *prasāda:* One day, along with a disciple, the revered Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī visited the Yogapīṭha and with great respect was honoring *prasāda* in the company of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and others. Apparently that disciple had expected an array of delicacies, for he obliquely commented, "This is such coarse *prasāda.* The Lord should be offered delectable dishes." Bābājī Mahārāja then instructed him, "Do not speak thus of Mahāprabhu's *prasāda.* One should take the wild vegetables and rough rice grown in the *dhāma,* and throughout the day perform Hari-*nāma,* Hari-*sevā,* and Hari-*kathā.* If the passion of the tongue appears, sexual desire will be aroused.

> *jihvāra lālase yei iti-uti dhāya*
> *śiśnodara-parāyaṇa kṛṣṇa nāhi pāya*
>
> A person subservient to the tongue and who thus goes here and there, devoted to the belly and genitals, cannot attain Kṛṣṇa." (Cc 3.6.227)

To counteract *bhoga-buddhi* (the attitude of personal enjoyment), Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would have Śrīmad B.P. Tīrtha sing Vaiṣṇava songs while devotees were honoring *mahā-prasāda.*

Twenty-six

Regulative Observances

Ekādaśī

On Ekādaśīs, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would fast until around four o'clock in the afternoon and then take a little fruit, and at night just a glass of milk. Although some disciples were inclined to observe Ekādaśī strictly, by total abstinence from both food and drink or by taking only water, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī emphasized that doing the needful for preaching was more important than such rigid fasting.

On one Ekādaśī most devotees remained at the Maṭha to observe fasting, but Śrīpāda Āśrama Mahārāja took *anukalpa-prasāda* and went out to preach.[*] Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura commented, "He has understood the principle of the Gauḍīya Maṭha." On another Ekādaśī, Hayagrīva Brahmacārī was supposed to attend a speaking engagement, yet because he was feeling unwell, he opted to skip the program and join the other Maṭha devotees in observing full fasting. When Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was informed of this he said, "Let him immediately eat and go."

One year, just prior to Janmāṣṭamī, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī decided that he would visit Mathurā shortly thereafter. He selected Hayagrīva Brahmacārī to go on Janmāṣṭamī day to rent a suitable house and make other arrangements. Considering the long and strenuous journey his disciple would have to undergo, he asked his own cook to feed Hayagrīva Prabhu a meal including rice, even though Janmāṣṭamī is to be observed strictly, by full fasting. But both the cook and Hayagrīva Prabhu hesitated. Hayagrīva Prabhu was prepared to travel even though fasting, yet to honor his guru-*mahārāja's* order he took *anukalpa-prasāda* instead of rice.

Initiated devotees followed the scriptural rule that if Ekādaśī fasting was not broken within the specified time on Dvādaśī, then the transgressor should continue fasting throughout that day.[†]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura once chastised a sannyasi disciple for taking a *rasagullā* on Ekādaśī, as *rasagullās* are made with a slight admixture of flour.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī opposed the *smārta* misconception prominent in Bengal that among women only widows should observe Ekādaśī fasting, and that for married women to do so would cause inauspiciousness for their husbands.[1] And he rebutted the idea that in Purī it is acceptable to take the *mahā-prasāda* grains of Lord Jagannātha on Ekādaśī.

Cātur-māsya and Other Observances

Although for many years Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had assiduously accepted many austerities during Cātur-māsya, after founding Śrī Caitanya Maṭha and focusing on preaching he ceased doing so.[*] He then followed only minor rules of Cātur-māsya: refraining from food forbidden for that period, eating only once a day, and shaving only on Viśvarūpa Mahotsava, which falls exactly in the middle of the four-month observance. He continued to execute Ūrja-*vrata* each year, residing in one place during Kārtika and practicing the directions given in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*. Yet some of his disciples, mostly *maṭha-vāsīs* less active in outside preaching, continued to perform Cātur-māsya in all details.

In 1935 Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī observed Kārtika-*vrata* at Rādhā-kuṇḍa. During *brāhma-muhūrta* his accompanying *śiṣyas* would approach him to offer *daṇḍavat* and receive blessings. Then, headed by the sannyasis, they would circumambulate Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa three times while performing *kīrtana.* Returning to the lotus feet of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī at Vraja Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja, for his transcendental pleasure they would sing *yama-kīrtana* and other songs according to his indication.[†]

On the first day, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī spoke on the glories of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa, and from the second day he lectured three times daily: in the morning on the *Upaniṣads,* during early afternoon from *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā,* chapter nineteen ("Rūpa-śikṣā," Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's instructions to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī), and in the evening on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In this way each day was spent intensively hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa. Yet as ever, his *bhajana* was permeated with concern for rectifying the world situation by broadcasting Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti.* During one Hari-*kathā* he declared that the foremost duty of persons desirous of being identified as Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, or at least claiming to have faith in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma, was to rescue that dharma from the hands of unscrupulous misinterpreters, that this duty must be fulfilled even at the expense of personal *bhajana,* and that the Gauḍīya Maṭha's preaching would destroy non-Gauḍīyas in the same manner that Agha, Baka, and Pūtanā had been vanquished.[2]

Once during Cātur-māsya, some produce from the garden at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, including vegetables proscribed during that period, was sent to Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha in Purī. Yet Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura ordered that the proscribed items be cooked, offered, and honored, explaining that their originating from the holy *dhāma* of Māyāpur overrode Cātur-māsya restrictions.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's lifelong practice, imbibed in childhood from Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, was to adhere to the prescription of *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* to fast on important festival days such as Janmāṣṭamī and Rādhāṣṭamī. And although he never stipulated that his disciples do so, as per his example and the injunctions of *śāstra* these praxes were adopted within the Gauḍīya Maṭha canon.

Twenty-seven

Health Issues

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu taught that a pure devotee's body should not be viewed as a conglomerate of blood and bones, for it is wholly spiritual:

> *prabhu kahe—"vaiṣṇava-deha 'prākṛta' kabhu naya*
> *'aprākṛta' deha bhaktera 'cid-ānanda-maya'"*
>
> The body of a devotee is never material. It is transcendental, full of spiritual bliss. (Cc 3.4.191)

Accordingly, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī clarified that, disease being a material condition, a *śuddha-bhakta* should never be considered sick. Especially *śrī-gurudeva* should always be seen in terms of his spiritual position. Because his body is not of this world, any corporeal affliction perceived in him should be appreciated either as a transcendental symptom of ecstasy or as meant for giving his disciples an opportunity to intimately serve him; anyone who adjudges the guru to be sick in the manner of an ordinary person is himself sick.

Descriptions of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's bodily state should be accepted with the aforesaid understanding. Generally his health was sufficiently good for executing regular activities, although not without sporadic ailments. In his latter days he became stiff and rheumatic, apparently due to spending much time seated. When occasionally he did fall ill, his outlook was to tolerate and depend on Kṛṣṇa. He never made substantial effort to cure sickness, and did not approve of extraneous bodily exercise for becoming super healthy. He averred, "Physical illness with Hari-*bhajana* is preferable to physical fitness without Hari-*bhajana*" and "Our root disease is accumulation of objects for personal pleasure rather than Kṛṣṇa's."[1] Hence he advised, "If disorders come, endure them, and in due course of time bid them farewell," and quoted Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja: "If painful maladies arrive in our body, they will soon leave automatically for want of sumptuous foodstuff. Only in the bodies of rich and comfort-loving people do diseases stay a long time, because they get much indulgence."[2] During Ūrja-*vrata* in Mathurā in 1934 Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura wrote: "I consider that even though my bodily condition may not be good, I shall not cease performing Kṛṣṇa-*bhajana,* for showing indifference to Kṛṣṇa-*bhajana* is not a proper policy. Nevertheless, if I become fully incapable then certainly my *bhajana* will be reduced to *smaraṇa* only."[3] He stated that the "eternal health of the soul" is situated at Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.[4]

Although at one point he consented to undergo a hernia operation, he later desisted, suspecting that the doctor had been hired to kill him.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura did not approve of *tulasī* being used as medicine.

Twenty-eight

Further Instructions and Anecdotes

When disciples would ask Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura about some plan for the future he never replied, "Yes, it is going to happen" or "We are going to do it," but would instead say, "If Kṛṣṇa desires, it may be." Similarly, he would not say, "I shall go there" or "I shall do this," but rather, "If Kṛṣṇa desires I shall go." Although in youth he had been a great astrologer, he later gave it up, considering that the future is ultimately in Kṛṣṇa's hands and therefore never fully predictable. He often quoted the English adage "Trust no future however pleasant."

He would say that the material world is not a fit place for a gentleman, declaring it "simply a society of cheaters and cheated." He gave the example that loose women often visit holy places with the intention of seducing sadhus, foolishly considering that to have a child by a sadhu is auspicious, and immoral men dress themselves as sadhus to lure such cheating women.

One morning Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura gave a forceful class on detachment from ephemeral life. Later that day he saw a monkey pilfering bananas from the storeroom next to his study. Springing up with a stick to chase the monkey, he overturned his table and spilled ink on his manuscript. Afterward a devotee asked, "Today you told us to be detached. How can we understand your behavior? For two bananas you jumped from your writing to chase a monkey and ruined your work in the process." Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura explained, "These bananas belong to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, because they were meant for Kṛṣṇa's service."

Touring with a group of disciples in June 1919, he visited the family home of Śrī Paramānanda Vidyāratna in Vinodanagar, Jessore District. The surrounding moat had long been infested with midges, yet upon Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's arrival the bugs vanished completely and forever.

In 1923 Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was invited to an installation of deities of Śrī Sītā-Rāma–Lakṣmaṇa–Hanumān in a village in the hills near Madhupur.* The provincial folk there had much faith in Rāma, but less in Kṛṣṇa, and barely any in Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Although respecting Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī as a devotee, they had little interest in his message. While he was lecturing in one home, news came that the host's infant nephew had fallen into a ceremonial fire at the installation site. Amid shrieks Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī placidly stated, "Where there is Hari-*kathā,* nothing inauspicious can happen." All became amazed to see the child toddle into their presence, smiling and completely unharmed. After this incident the local people took Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī more seriously.

Once some college students confided to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, "We are doing wrong. We know it is not good, yet we commit sin again and again, then repent again and again. Why do we fluctuate like this?" Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura answered, "It is *hṛdaya-daurbalyam* (weakness of heart). Your conscience and discrimination are not strong, thus you commit sins. But if you associate with a Kṛṣṇa conscious sadhu, his influence will be injected into you. At that time the

heart will be purified. *Sādhu-saṅga, sādhu-kṛpā,* is necessary to overcome sin. Alone you cannot do it."

Śrī Kiśorī-mohana Bhakti Bāndhava, headmaster of the Thakur Bhakti Vinode Institute, once asked, "*Maṭha-vāsīs* give up everything to practice *bhakti,* so why is it that many don't improve to the advanced stage?" Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī answered, "They have intestinal worms. Whatever they eat does not nourish them, so they become frail. In other words, although they perform *bhakti,* their advancement is consumed by selfish desires and secret bad behavior."

Since his disciples often traveled the waterways, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī taught them appropriate respect: "Not only Gaṅgā, but all these rivers are exalted personages. Don't think of them as ordinary water. If you have taken *mahā-prasāda,* do not throw your remnants or leaf-plates into the river. And if after eating you wash your hands in the water, then you are placing your remnants there. So better to avoid eating while traversing holy rivers." He also insisted on the standard etiquette that before bathing in a sacred body of water one should first perform obeisance at the bank, recite prayers, and respectfully sprinkle a little water on the head.

Once while en route for Naimiṣāraṇya, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was standing on the steps of a pond when suddenly the water rose up to touch his lotus feet and then receded to its normal position. Seeing this, the disciples accompanying him eagerly rushed forward to drink from that newly created pool of *caraṇāmṛta.*

Lecturing in 1936 in rural areas near Sarbhog, Assam, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura traveled by bullock cart while his accompanying disciples walked. One day when passing another cart, he asked a teenage *brāhmaṇa* boy sitting thereon his name, who his family was, and where he was going. This brief and apparently commonplace exchange left a deep impression on the youth, who from that day ensouled the memory of the effulgent sadhu who had spoken to him. Seeing his newfound otherworldly absorption, and desiring that he remain at home to continue the family profession of guruship, his parents much restricted his movements. Nonetheless, he eventually escaped and joined the Gauḍīya Maṭha. After Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's disappearance he was initiated by Śrīmad Mādhava Mahārāja, who later inducted him into *sannyāsa,* with the name Āśrama Mahārāja.[*]

Some people regularly came to fish in the pond at Saccidānanda Maṭha. One man who persisted despite being repeatedly warned not to do so, even by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī himself, was one day fatally bitten by a snake while fishing.[1]

At Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha a visiting advocate, although thrice asked by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to stop, smoked in his presence. Shortly thereafter he became infected with cholera and died.[2]

In Jamshedpur, an industrial city of North India, a large gathering awaited Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī at an evening function. Upon ascending the dais he immediately bowed down. It is not known whether he was bowing to the audience themselves or to some

demigods or *ṛṣis* whom others could not see, but the crowd was so amazed that a famous guru could be so humble that all of the several thousand in attendance returned *daṇḍavat*.

During April 1935 at Mādhva Gauḍīya Maṭha, a group of respectable ladies of Dacca came close to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, offered obeisance, and were about to offer flowers at his lotus feet when he checked them: "O mothers, I am wholly unworthy of the respect you propose to show me. The body that I presently inhabit should be incessantly whipped, then plastered with dust and mud, thrown in a gutter, and left there. He to whom you have offered obeisance considers himself lower than a maggot of hell. He is particularly shy about this act of yours, seeing which he wonders why he is sitting on a raised seat. Considering you to be servants of Kṛṣṇa, he offers ten thousand obeisances at your feet. You are serving Kṛṣṇa—which he is incapable of doing. And for those inclined to freely touch anyone's feet, I recall the words of my *gurudeva:* 'Why do they so boldly stretch out their hands to take dust from the feet of a sadhu? Do they really consider themselves sufficiently qualified?' *Satyaṁ bruyāt priyaṁ bruyāt, na bruyāt satyam apriyam:* 'Speak the truth if it is pleasing; do not utter truth if it is unpleasant'—this principle of ordinary morality cannot show its force in proximity to the morality of Kṛṣṇa-*bhajana.*[3] *Yei jana kṛṣṇa bhaje, se baḍa catura:* "Whoever worships Kṛṣṇa is highly clever."[4] If you offer respect from a distance, we can do likewise. Yet if you try to forcefully touch the feet, your mind will be more attracted to the gross manifestation. *Smārtas* cannot understand the words of Vaiṣṇavas. Considering Vaiṣṇavas to be *bhogīs,* some *smārtas* offer *tulasī* at the feet of their guru! Actually *tulasī* is to be offered only to the feet of the possessor of all potency. *Tulasī* may also be placed in the hand of the supreme potency, Śrīmatī [Rādhā]. To offer obeisance at the feet of one Vaiṣṇava yet insolently grab the neck of another is but hypocrisy."[5]

In a letter, apparently in response to queries, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī established the transcendental nature and ultimate oneness of various prime activities in *bhakti:*

> Although service to Krsna, service to devotees, and chanting the holy name are three different activities, the purpose of all three of them is one.
>
> *nāma saṅkīrtanera dvāra kṛṣṇa o kārṣṇa-sevā haya*
> *vaiṣṇavera sevā karile kṛṣṇa kīrtana o kṛṣṇa-sevā haya*
> *kṛṣṇa-sevā karilei nāma-saṅkīrtana vaiṣṇava-sevā haya*
> *tāhāra pramāṇa ei—sattvaṁ viśuddhaṁ vasudeva-śabditam*
>
> Through *nāma-saṅkīrtana* one serves both Kṛṣṇa and His devotees; by serving Vaiṣṇavas one performs both Kṛṣṇa-*kīrtana* and Kṛṣṇa-*sevā;* and by Kṛṣṇa-*sevā* both *nāma-saṅkīrtana* and Vaiṣṇava-*sevā* are effected. The proof of this statement is *sattvaṁ viśuddhaṁ vasudeva-śabditam:* "Worshiping Vasudeva is enacted on the platform of pure goodness".[6]
>
> By recitation of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* Kṛṣṇa-*sevā* and *nāma-saṅkīrtana* are effected. The same is accomplished by reciting *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* among devotees. *Arcana* also

includes these three kinds of duties. They are also well executed by *nāma-bhajana*.[7]

Twenty-nine

His Eternal Form and Internal Ecstasy

In his writings Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had intimated his *siddha-svarūpa* to be Kamala Mañjarī, a young *gopī.* And Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had declared Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī to be Guṇa Mañjarī. In a letter to Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu in 1921, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura wrote of his internal feelings and position on the spiritual plane:

> Śrī Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī addresses Her young maidservant as Nayana-maṇi Mañjarī and wants her always by Her side. But sometimes she cannot be with Her. Vimalā Mañjarī, who is ever connected with Nayana-maṇi Mañjarī, being deprived of the association of Śrī Rādhā, leaves on the pretense of severing ties with Nayana-maṇi Mañjarī. Yet it is the very nature of Vimalā Mañjarī to ensure that Nayana-maṇi Mañjarī perpetually engages in service to Śrī Vārṣabhānavī-devī.[1]

When some time later Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu told Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī that in a dream he had seen him as Nayana-maṇi Mañjarī in Vraja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī simply laughed. Thereafter his followers were convinced that his *siddha-svarūpa* was Nayana-maṇi Mañjarī, a young assistant *gopī* who is the personification of the aspect of Rādhā that is dearest to Kṛṣṇa. *Nayana-maṇi* literally means "the jewel, or pupil, of the eye" and figuratively denotes an item most treasured. From Kṛṣṇa's perspective the very form of Śrī Rādhā is most enchanting. In Her form, Her face is most enchanting. In Her face, Her eyes are most enchanting. And in Her eyes, the pupils (*nayana-maṇi*) are most enchanting. From Rādhā's standpoint, Her *nayana-maṇi* are Her most precious possession, being Her means for beholding Kṛṣṇa. Wishing to alleviate Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's pain of separation, Nayana-maṇi Mañjarī always desires their union so that each may satisfy the other's only desired object of vision.[*]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's staid persona contrasted with the expressive Bengali psyche and the showy displays of *prākṛta-sahajiyās.* His ecstasy was demonstrated in practical service to Lord Caitanya's mission, in his incessant drive to preach. His very life was *kīrtana,* much of which focused on refuting worldly misconceptions and establishing the absolute truth. Yet such didacticism was not per se the inner purpose of his *kīrtana,* which had been disclosed to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and conveyed by him in a series of instructions to Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī:[†]

> *hṛdaye balila kebā, dayita-dāsera sevā,*
> *gopīdhana-kathāra kīrtana*
>
> Someone spoke in my heart, "The service of Dayita dāsa is to glorify topics of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the wealth of the *gopīs.*"[2]

Through this couplet his *kīrtana* was revealed as a projection of his *nitya-sevā* to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-

Govinda onto the plane of *saṅkīrtana* in Gaura-*līlā,* and indicated that hearing from him or assisting him in his service of broadcasting Hari-*kathā* is equivalent to, or the means to acquire eligibility for, seeing that which is most dear to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.[‡]

During a lecture in 1933 Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura similarly hinted of the higher goal of his mission:

> I had many points to make about *śuddha-bhakti* and topics of Mahāprabhu that should be preached. But before saying these things I have taken up much of your time with introductory talks. If the Lord wills, I shall be able to elaborate all these subjects.[3]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura also said that the words *ārādhyo bhagavān vrajeśa-tanayaḥ,* from a famous verse summarizing the teachings of Śrī Gaurasundara, indicate that Rādhā is to be worshiped along with Vrajendra-nandana, and further elaborated that the supreme duty of Gauḍīyas is to serve the Vraja-*vāsīs* in their distress of separation after Kṛṣṇa left for Mathurā.[4*] This service being the essence of the multifarious services performed by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, it expanded as the intrinsic yet esoteric and generally unstated aim of all activities of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, namely, to bring *jīvas* toward the platform of serving the superlative expression of *unnatojjvala-rasa* in Rādhā-*dāsya*.[†] His innermost appetency was likewise revealed in his Bengali presentation of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Upadeśāmṛta:*

> *śrī-vārṣabhānavī-devī kabe dayita dāsere*
> *kuṇḍa-tīre sthāna dibe nija-jana kare*
>
> When will the daughter of Vṛṣabhānu make this servant of Her beloved Her own, and give him a place on the bank of Rādhā-kuṇḍa?[*]

Although undoubtedly ever immersed in the intense bliss of *prema-bhakti,* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was reticent to reveal his inmost feelings. Yet he could not always contain his whirling emotions, and sometimes his natural ecstatic love became visible to everyone.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī treasured Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī's *Vilāpa-kusumāñjali* and Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī's *Rādhā-rasa-sudhā-nidhi,* both highly confidential expressions of plangent longing for service to Rādhā. In intimate moments with disciples he occasionally recited *Vilāpa-kusumāñjali* 102:

> *āśā-bharair amṛta-sindhu-mayaiḥ kathañcit*
> *kālo mayāti-gamitaḥ kila sāmprataṁ hi*
> *tvaṁ cet kṛpāṁ mayi vidhāsyasi naiva kiṁ me*
> *prāṇair vrajena ca varoru bakāriṇāpi*
>
> There is a hope sustaining me and nurturing my existence. With this expectation I somehow pass my days, dragging my life through these drawn-out times. That nectarous ocean of hope is attracting me and keeping me alive. But my patience has reached its end;

I can no longer endure. I cannot wait another moment. If You (Rādhārāṇī) do not immediately show Your grace to me, I am finished. I will lose all hope forever. I will have no desire to continue my life, for it would be totally useless. Without Your grace I cannot bear to live another moment. And Vṛndāvana, more dear to me than my very life—I am disgusted with it. It is painful, ever pinching me. And what to speak of anything else, I am disgusted even with Kṛṣṇa. Shameful though it be to utter such words, I can have no love even for Kṛṣṇa unless You take me within Your confidential camp of service. O Rādhā, if I do not get Your favor, then I want nothing else. I want You and You alone. To have an independent relationship with anyone else, eliminating You, is impossible for me. You must be first, then others. Without You, I can never even think of a separate relationship with Kṛṣṇa.[5]

Upon reciting this verse Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would become transfixed and overcome with emotion, his face like that of a phantom.[6] He also stated that the meaning of his name Śrī Vārṣabhānavī-devī-dayita dāsa was made clear by the last two lines of this stanza: "O Rādhā, if You are not merciful to me, then of what use are Kṛṣṇa, Vraja, and even life itself?"

During a conversation with Śrī Śaradindu Nārāyaṇa Rāya in Calcutta in November 1930, the first verse of *Vilāpa-kusumāñjali* flashed into Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's mind and he recited it:

tvaṁ rūpa-mañjari sakhi prathitā pure 'smin
puṁsaḥ parasya vadanaṁ na hi paśyasīti
bimbādhare kṣatam anāgata-bhartṛkāyā
yat te vyadhāyi kim u tac chuka-puṅgavena

O friend Rūpa Mañjarī, it is well known in this town that you do not look at the face of any man other than your husband. He is not here, and yet there is a mark on the *bimba* fruits of your lips as if someone has bitten them. Did a large parrot bite them?

As Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī began to explain this verse, his voice faltered and then choked up. Tears streamed from his eyes, his body quivered, and his hairs stood on end. Gripped with ecstasy, he fell from his wooden chair to the floor. Disciples in attendance helped him up, and carefully supporting him, led him to an adjoining interior apartment. Śaradindu Babu followed him inside, and after offering fully prostrated *daṇḍavat* declared, "This happened because we are not fit to hear such topics." Observing this upsurge of ecstasy in their characteristically deeply grave *ācārya,* his disciples became stunned and motionless, like figures in a painting. After some time the visitors left, and eventually Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī returned to external consciousness. He then lamented to the remaining devotees, "Today I have succumbed to great weakness by speaking topics of the spiritual realm in the presence of ordinary persons. I didn't realize that so many outsiders were here. On what level are the talks of commonplace folk, engaged in satisfying their bodies and minds, and on what level are the talks of Śrī Rūpa-Raghunātha? Better to speak according to the judgment of Rūpa-Raghunātha."[7]

Once when Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was sojourning at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Śrī Paramānanda Brahmacārī appreciatively reported that the dewan of Bharatpur was there performing *daṇḍavat parikramā* with his whole family.[*] Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura clarified that the dewan's high regard for Rādhā was due to Her connection with Kṛṣṇa, but "we worship Kṛṣṇa only because of His connection with Rādhā."

Śrīmat Parvata Mahārāja once asked his guru-*mahārāja* why Kṛṣṇa had disappeared from the presence of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī after taking Her away from the *rāsa* dance.[8] Upon hearing this query Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī became disturbed, for in that pastime apparently Kṛṣṇa had slighted Rādhārāṇī. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had explained in his *Bhāgavatārka-marīci-mālā,* a study of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* that Kṛṣṇa disappeared solely to witness the depth of separation that Rādhārāṇī felt from Him. But Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was so partial toward Rādhārāṇī that he could not hear anything seemingly demeaning to Her, and in an agitated spirit retorted, "What *bhakti* do you find here that prompts you to ask this?" The very question was rejected.

By such exchanges, his closest disciples perceived that internally he perpetually experienced separation from Rādhārāṇī and was even more partial to Rādhā than to Kṛṣṇa. Yet he distinguished between the "Rādhā" imagined by the *prākṛta-sahajiyās* and She who is the mistress of Rūpa-Raghunātha.[9] In a lecture given on Rādhāṣṭamī he stated that Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the wealth by which Govinda is wealthy, and that if after going through all eighteen thousand verses of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* the reader did not find Her therein, then his study was simply useless.

Upon mentioning or hearing the name Rādhā, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura sometimes suddenly manifested various symptoms of *aṣṭa-sāttvika-vikāra,* the eight symptoms of transcendental ecstasy described in Vaiṣṇava literature: *stambha*—being stunned; *sveda*—perspiring; *romāñca*—horripilation; *gadgada* or *svara-bheda*—stammering; *kampa* or *vepathu*—trembling; *vaivarṇya*—pallor; *aśru*—tearfulness; and *pralaya*—fainting. Despite trying to maintain gravity, his entire body would stiffen and his words become choked. Sometimes upon entering his room, disciples found Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura sitting alone in ecstatic reverie, weeping profusely.

At a public meeting a gentleman questioned, "Why do Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas so much emphasize Rādhā? Why do you neglect Lakṣmī?" He then recited several scriptural references glorifying Lakṣmī. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī found himself in a quandary. Glorification of Rādhā was not to be spoken openly, yet he was obliged to reply to uphold Her dignity and that of the previous *ācāryas* for whom She was the topmost object of reverence. Rent by this dilemma, he fainted.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī particularly relished contemplating and describing Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's feelings during the last twelve years of His manifest pastimes, when His identification with Rādhārāṇī's feelings of separation from Kṛṣṇa became superlatively intense. Whenever he described these pastimes, tears would flow from his eyes, but he would wipe

them away and go on speaking. Inevitably he would lose himself in ecstasy and become oblivious to the exterior world. Upon emerging from trance, in a fluttering voice he would repeat Śrī Caitanya's poetic lamentation:

hā hā kṛṣṇa prāṇa-dhana, hā hā padma-locana,
hā hā divya sad-guṇa-sāgara!
hā hā śyāmasundara, hā hā pītāmbara-dhara,
hā hā rāsa-vilāsa nāgara

kāhāṅ gele tomā pāi, tumi kaha tāhāṅ yāi

> Alas! Where is Kṛṣṇa, the treasure of my life? Where is the lotus-eyed one? Alas! Where is the divine ocean of all transcendental qualities? Alas! Where is the beautiful blackish youth dressed in yellow garments? Alas! Where is the hero of the *rāsa* dance? Where can I go to find Him? Tell me and I will go there. (Cc 3.17.60–61)

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura similarly relished the esoteric significance of Caitanya Mahāprabhu's pastimes at Lord Jagannātha's Ratha-yātrā, as described in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* 2.13 and encapsulated in verse 113:

> *sei ta parāṇa-nātha pāinu,*
> *yāhā lāgi' madana-dahane jhuri' genu*
>
> Now I have gained the Lord of My life, in the absence of whom I was being burned by Cupid and was withering away.

When asked to disclose his *svarūpa* by Śrīmad Bhāratī Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī replied that the *svarūpa* of *paramahaṁsas* like Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī is as they appear in this world, for their bodily features are transcendental and eternal. Such devotees are *gaura-nija-jana* (personal associates of Lord Caitanya). *Gaurāṅgera saṅgi-gaṇe, nitya-siddha kari' māne:* "Gaurāṅga's associates should be understood as eternally perfect, eternally established in service to Kṛṣṇa as His eternal associates."[10] He explained that devotees of Lord Caitanya have two eternal forms: in Gaura-*līlā* they appear in male bodies, and in Kṛṣṇa-*līlā* as females. The form they manifest in Gaura-*līlā* is also their eternal *svarūpa*. Even their apparent physical imperfections are transcendental. For instance, Lord Caitanya's associate Bhagavān Ācārya appeared as lame because in Gaura-*līlā* he is eternally so. Similarly, the ostensibly non-Vaiṣṇava names of certain devotees of Lord Caitanya, such as Jhaḍu Ṭhākura, are their eternal designations.

Notes

References of the type "vol. *x,* p. *y*" indicate entries in *Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava.*

Maṅgalācaraṇa

1 These two verses are Cc 1.1.20–21.

Preface

1 *Gauḍīya* 13.291–92.

2 "Purified men who are thoroughly honest"—from Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda's translation of SB 1.5.11.

3 The preceding two sentences are based on Cc 1.4.232–36.

4 "The Real Nature of Sree Krishna," *Sree Krishna Chaitanya,* vol. 1, intro. chap 2.

5 Av 352.

6 See Cc 1.1.46, commentary.

7 The last three sentences of this paragraph are based on a statement in *Gauḍīya* 6.20.6.

8 *Gauḍīya* 12.654.

Apologia

1 *Gauḍīya Prabandha-mālā* 2.242.

2 Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura presented this supplication several times in *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata.*

Editorial Notes

1 *Harmonist* 29.15 (July 1931).

Nomenclature

1 Gv 1.239–40.

2 *Śrīla Prabhupādera Boktṛtābalī* 4.58.

Part One: Biographical Overview

Early Life

1 *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 4.3.41 (1891).

2 *Sāmudrika,* quoted as Cc 1.14.15.

3 *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 18.6.222–23.

4 *Īśopaniṣad* 1.

5 *Gauḍīya* 12.640.

6 Sj 24.

7 *Harmonist* 34.10 (17 August 1937).

8 *Gauḍīya* 6.686.

9 This anecdote was adapted from various orally transmitted versions, including one received secondhand from a sannyasi disciple of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.

10 *Harmonist* 31.487 (27 June 1935).

11 *Gauḍīya* 12.641.

12 *Prabhupada Saraswati Thakur* 38–39.

Pre-Sannyāsa Period

1 *Gauḍīya* 16.361.

2 Gv 2.10. Spoken on the *tirobhāva-tithi* of Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī in 1930.

3 From the song beginning *gurudeva! kṛpā-bindu diyā,* in *Gītāvalī.*

4 Gv 2.10.

5 Gv 2.10–11.

6 Hk 1.61.

7 *Harmonist* 30.266 (March 1933). From the speech delivered by Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī

during his 1933 Vyāsa-*pūjā* celebration, at the *samādhi* of Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī, in Māyāpur.

8 "Āmāra Prabhura Kathā," *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 19.177–84, 220–25.

9 Gv 2.3.

10 Sambidānanda Dāsa, *History and Literature,* 788–89.

11 Gv 2.301–2.

12 Letter (24 August 1932), *Gauḍīya* 11.95.

13 *Gauḍīya* 15.256.

14 Gv 2.302.

15 Sj 2–3.

16 From the poetic envoy to his *Anuvṛtti* gloss on *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta.*

17 Sj 135–36.

18 See Cc 3.1.218–19.

19 Sj 188–89.

Early Days of the Mission

1 Sj 37.

2 *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 21.8–9.259–62.

Rapid Expansion

1 That Chittaranjan Dāsa had accorded this title was told by Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

2 Nityānanda Prabhu's worship of Caitanya Mahāprabhu is described in Cb 2.5. Discovery of *Saṅkṣepa-vyāsa-pūjā-paddhati* is described in *Nadia Prakash* 12.293.5.

3 "Dharma-jagate Vaiṣṇava Darśanera Sthāna," *Śrīla Prabhupādera Boktṛtābalī* 1.66–79.

4 Sj 27.

5 See Cc 2.19.61.

6 Cb 2.14.23, commentary.

7 *Mahashakti,* 19 June 1926.

8 Quoted in *Gauḍīya* 5.16.

9 Lord Caitanya's visit to Varāhanagara is described in Cb 3.5.110–21.

10 Quoted in *Gauḍīya* 9.227–28.

11 *Gauḍīya* 9.181.

12 PST 43.

13 Sambidānanda Dāsa, *History and Literature,* 811–12.

14 SB 5.9.

15 Hk 3.68.

16 *Leader,* 23 November 1932; *Harmonist* 30.180 (December 1932).

17 Gv 1.62.

Troubling Undercurrents

1 *Kalyāṇa-kalpataru.*

2 *Gauḍīya* 11.347.

3 Śvetadvīpa Dāsa.

4 "Ohe! Vaiṣṇava Ṭhākura," *Śaraṇāgati.*

5 Letter (26 June 1927), *Patrāvalī* 2.53.

6 Letter (20 October 1928), *Patrāvalī* 1.61.

7 Gv 2.149–50.

8 *Gauḍīya* 11.347.

9 Quoted in *Gauḍīya* 16.11–12.

10 *Nadia Prakash* 10.2016; *Gauḍīya* 14.393–95.

11 All but the first sentence of this paragraph was told by Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

12 Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

13 "Cementing policy"—*Gauḍīya* 15.516.

14 PST 45–46.

Final Years and Disapperance

1 Letter (22 December 1927), *Patrāvalī* 1.43.

2 Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

3 The lecture whence this excerpt was taken is featured in Gv 2.137–51.

4 This paragraph is culled from various statements of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. For instance, see *Letters from Śrīla Prabhupāda* 3.1434, 4.2476, and *Collected Teachings of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda* 1.360.

5 From a Maithili song by the classic Vaiṣṇava poet Vidyāpati, beginning *tātala saikate.*

6 This paragraph is based on text from *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta* 1.88.

7 This lecture is recorded in Gv 1.279–95.

8 Lecture, 18 Phālguna 1334; *Gauḍīya* 15.23–24.8; SPU 396.

9 Bhakti Śaraṇa Trivikrama Mahārāja.

10 Gv 2.243–44.

11 Rūpa Gosvāmī, refrain of *Govardhanāṣṭakam* (first).

12 Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, refrain of *Govardhana-vāsa-prārthanā-daśakam*.

13 *Gauḍīya* 15.321.

14 "About ten days... ten years."—told by Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

15 Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, *Muktā-carita.*

16 *Gauḍīya* 15.23–24, 2–3.

17 *Gauḍīya* 15.23–24 p. *cha.*

18 Lecture, 8 February 1977, the *āvirbhāva-tithi* of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.

Part Two: His Message, Mission, and Personality

Qualities and Character

1 This sentence is based on a statement in Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's *Anubhāṣya* on Cc 1.10.84.

2 Bon Mahārāja.

3 Cc 2.10.179.

4 Lecture, 1926; *Gauḍīya* 15.432; *Nadia Prakash,* 12.276.1127.

5 Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, *Caitanya-candrāmṛta* 49. For the full verse and translation, see vol. 2, p. 209, and vol. 3, pp. 83–84.

6 Sj 33–34.

The Revolutionary Preacher of Truth

1 Gv 3.267; Sj 33.

2 SB 1.1.2. For the full verse and translation, see vol. 3, pp. 76–77.

3 The comparison to jars of poison is from SCT 168.

4 *Harmonist* 25.230 (March 1928).

5 *Gauḍīya* 14.171.

6 Av 212; SPU 353.

7 Letter (10 June 1916), *Patrāvalī* 2.13.

8 SPU 108.

9 *Harmonist* 31.410 (14 May 1935).

10 *Śrī Śrī Sarasvatī Saṁlāpa* (Allahabad), 43–44; SCT 241.

11 The quote beginning “A flatterer” is from *Gauḍīya* 15.23–24.8. The next and fourth sentence were told by Jati Śekhara Prabhu; the third is from *Patrāvalī* 3.76; the fifth and sixth are from Gv 1.146.

12 Gv 1.175–76.

13 Cc 2.3.212, commentary.

14 *Paśūnāṁ laguḍo yathā*—SB 10.68.31.

15 *Harmonist* 29.72–73 (September 1931).

16 *Harmonist* 28.243 (January 1931).

17 *Harmonist* 287.264 (February 1931).

18 *Gauḍīya* 14.171.

19 "Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda," *Harmonist* 29.167–73 (December 1931) (featured in vol. 3, pp. 141–47).

20 Av 308–9; SPU 137.

21 *Gauḍīya* 5.25; Hk 1.52.

22 *Harmonist* 29.113–14 (October 1931).

23 *Nadia Prakash,* 12.293.8 (19 February 1938).

24 *Harmonist* 26.249–50 (April 1929); SCT 362–63.

25 *Letters from Śrīla Prabhupāda* 4.2313.

26 Hk 3.10, 13.

27 Commentaries on Cc 2.12.135, 2.19.159.

28 SCT 343–44.

29 *Gauḍīya* 13.213; Gv 3.34.

30 *Śrīla Prabhupādera Boktṛtābalī* 3.98.

31 SPU 288.

32 Gv 1.61–62.

33 *Harmonist* 33.92–93 (24 December 1936).

34 Sj 238.

35 Sj 17.

36 *Śrī Śrī Sarasvatī Saṁlāpa* (Allahabad), 43; SCT 240.

37 *Harmonist* 27.122–23 (September 1929).

38 SPU 220; quoted in vol. 3, p. 117.

Yukta-vairāgya

1 Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Cc 1.7.31–32, purport.

2 "Vaiṣṇava Ke?" 12. (See vol. 3, p. 30)

3 Gv 1.55.

4 Gv 1.58.

5 Gv 2.199–200.

6 Gv 1.52.

7 SB 11.9.15, commentary.

8 Cc 2.22.116.

9 Gv 2.124.

10 SBT 190.

11 *Prārthanā.*

12 Letter (20 October 1931), *Patrāvalī* 2.100–101.

13 Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

14 Ibid.

15 Letter (27 June 1933), Sj 207.

16 That proscription is recorded in Brs 1.2.78.

17 Sundarānanda Prabhu's first radio lecture is featured in *Gauḍīya* 13.686–89.

18 SB 11.2.48, commentary.

19 Gv 1.51–52.

20 Gv 1.168.

21 Gv 3.162.

Vaiṣṇava Sannyāsa

1 This debate is recorded in Cc 1.17.

2 As explained in his commentary on Cc 2.3.6.

3 Cc 3.13.61.

4 Cc 3.13.61, commentary.

5 Adapted from notes from a speech by Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī at a meeting of the Navadvīpa-dhāma-pracāriṇī Sabhā (B.P. Puri, *Of Love and Separation,* 74).

6 *Harmonist* 31.271 (14 February 1935).

7 Gv 1.293.

8 In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* Lord Caitanya is quoted three times using the phrase *markaṭa-vairāgya.*

9 From Śrīdhara Svāmī's commentary on SB 2.2.6, cited in *Bhakti-sandarbha* 2.2.

10 Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, Cc 2.18.111–13, commentary.

The Seer and the Seen

1 Gv 1.60.

2 This quote is a continuation of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's comments on Cc 3.20.52.

3 This description of *padmā-nīti* is based on an account in *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* 1.6.73– 75.

4 Cc 2.9.194, from the section clarifying Rāvaṇa's abduction of *māyā-sītā,* the illusory material form of Sītā.

5 Re Galileo's utterance, see: Herman Weyl, "Mathematics and the Laws of Nature" in *The Armchair Science Reader,* ed. Isabel S. Gordon and Sophie Sorkin (New York: Simon and

Schuster, 1959), 300.

Mīyate... māyā—This definition is widely quoted by various schools of Vedic thinkers. It also appears in *Jaiva Dharma,* chap. 15, and *Śrī Śrī Sarasvatī Saṁlāpa* (Allahabad), 31.

6 *Gauḍīya* 13.292.

7 SCT 340.

8 Av 129; SPU 7.

9 *Gauḍīya* 15.253–57.

10 *Gauḍīya* 14.172.

11 Sj 23–24.

12 Gv 1.190–91.

13 SPU 9.

14 *Śrutekṣita-pathaḥ*—SB 3.9.11.

15 Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

16 B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja.

17 *Śrī Śrī Sarasvatī Saṁlāpa (*Allahabad), 80.

18 *Gauḍīya* 16.257.

19 Cc 2.9.191.

20 *Brahmavan... tat—Viṣṇu Purāṇa,* cited in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* 9.404. The anecdote is from "Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda o Dṛg-dṛśya-vicāra," *Gauḍīya* 16.24.403–6.

Transcendental Morality

1 *Harmonist* 26.129–35 (November 1928); 155–59 (December 1928).

2 Gv 3.25–26.

3 SCT 254–56; *Gauḍīya* 8.132.

4 Av 82; SPU 190.

5 SPU 190.

6 SB 10.4.

7 Cb 2.16.4–17.

8 Cb 2.23.17–47.

9 *Gauḍīya* 20.320.

10 The previous three paragraphs are culled from a lengthy dissertation in Dacca on morality, from Gv 3.49–68.

11 SPU 190.

Vaiṣṇavism and Vedic Literature

1 *Śrī Śrī Sarasvatī Saṁlāpa (*Allahabad), 119 and 132.

2 *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 1.2.15.

3 Bg 15.15.

4 Rūpa Gosvāmī, *Nāmāṣṭaka* 1.

5 Gv 3.208.

6 *Harmonist* 25.78–81 (September 1927).

7 *Ṛg Veda* 1.156.3. This translation follows Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's Bengali rendering (SB 11.2.49, commentary) of Jīva Gosvāmī's explanation (*Bhāgavat-sandarbha* 47.44) of this passage.

8 Hk 2.15–16.

The Gauḍīya Maṭha

1 Hk 1.23.

2 Gv 2.4.

3 Gv 2.263.

4 Gv 1.185–86.

5 *Harmonist* 28.130 (October 1930).

6 *Harmonist* 33.94 (24 December 1936).

7 "The *Gauḍīya* Maṭha," *Harmonist* 28.131 (October 1930).

8 *Harmonist* 28.165 (November 1930).

9 *Harmonist* 28.134 (October 1930) and 28.165 (November 1930).

10 *Gauḍīya* 2.7. In other Gauḍīya Maṭha publications this is quoted with slight variations.

11 "Vaiṣṇava Ke?" 18. (See vol. 3, p. 32)

12 *Gauḍīya* 15.23–24.8; Gv 3.293.

13 Letter (22 December 1927), *Patrāvalī* 1.43.

14 Gv 3.224.

15 *Gauḍīya* 15.23–24.8.

16 Gv 2.63.

17 Gv 3.267.

18 Gv 3.222.

19 Av 317; SPU 292.

20 *Gauḍīya* 9.171.

On Tour

1 Rūpa Gosvāmī, *Prathama Śrī Caitanyāṣṭaka* 8, in *Stava-mālā.*

2 See Cc 2.2.53–54.

3 *Harmonist* 25.144 (November 1927).

4 *Harmonist* 28.280 (February 1931).

5 Quoted in *Harmonist* 29.256 (February 1932).

6 *Justice,* 26 January 1932; quoted in *Harmonist* 29.286 (March 1932).

7 The statements in this and the previous paragraph were told by Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

8 SBT 69.

Chanting the Holy Names

1 Letter (29 October 1934), *Patrāvalī* 3.38.

2 Cb 2.23.78.

3 Letter (17 March 1915), *Patrāvalī* 2.3.

4 This sentence is a translation of a portion of *Bhakti-sandarbha* 273.16.

5 SPU 274.

6 This analogy appears also in *Upākhyāne Upadeśa.*

7 Brs 1.3.25.

8 This anecdote was told by Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

9 SCT 362.

10 SPU 402; SCT 84.

11 SBT 58–59.

12 *Gauḍīya* 20.64.

13 B.V. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, *Ācārya Kesarī,* 64–65.

14 Gv 3.172.

15 Gv 3.ii.

16 E.g., *Patrāvalī* 1.68.

17 Cb 3.9.121, commentary.

18 Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

19 SPU 398.

20 *Śrī Caitanya Vāṇī* [the magazine of Śrī Caitanya Gauḍīya Maṭha] 13.12.34 (29 January

1974).

21 Śrutakīrti Dāsa, *What is the Difficulty?* (Radlett, U.K.: Dharma Publications, 2006), 128.

22 *Padma Purāṇa,* cited as Cc 2.17.133.

23 "Śrī Kṛṣṇera Aṣṭottara-śata nāma" (108 names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa), a Bengali poem by Dvija Haridāsa, commonly recited and almost univerally known among various sects of Gauḍīyas at that time.

24 Letter (4 November 1915), *Patrāvalī* 2.10.

25 Letter (2 August 1915), *Patrāvalī* 2.7.

Service to Śāstra

1 Hk 2.79.

2 Gv 2.176.

3 Letter (24 September 1930), *Patrāvalī* 2.82.

4 *Gauḍīya* 17.331.

5 Av 236; SPU 207. The quoted Sanskrit is an adaption from *Bhakti-sandarbha* 171.5, from Jīva Gosvāmī's comments on SB 11.20.27–28.

6 SCT 371.

7 *Nārada-pañcarātra* 2.2.25; quoted in Av 194–95; SPU 155.

8 *Gauḍīya* 20.319.

9 Letter (25 May 1933), Sj 207.

10 *Harmonist* 33.94 (24 December 1936).

11 *Harmonist* 26.277–78 (May 1929).

12 *Gauḍīya* 20.540.

13 Gv 3.106.

14 *Harmonist* 28.127 (September 1930).

15 SBT 25.

16 Gv 1.48.

17 *Gauḍīya* 11.346.

18 *Gauḍīya* 15.334.

19 Gv 1.48. The quoted Sanskrit is from *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.15.

20 *Gauḍīya* 20.28–29.360.

21 Gv 1.163.

22 B.V. Bhāratī, *Śrī Gaura-harira Atyadbhuta-camatkārī Bhauma-līlāmṛta,* 1.3–4.

23 Gv 2.175.

24 Gv 2.278.

25 See Av 315–16, SPU 122, and *Gauḍīya* 14.171.

26 Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

27 *Gauḍīya* 17.27–28.475.

28 *Bahu-grantha-kalābhyāsa*—Brs 1.2.79; Cc 2.22.118.

29 In this paragraph, everything up to this point was told by Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

30 Hk 3.21.

31 *Nadia Prakash* 12.293.7.

32 *Harmonist* 31.496–97 (27 June 1935).

33 Cb 1.2.72, commentary.

34 Gv 1.51.

35 Av 268–69; SPU 311–12.

36 *Gauḍīya* 20.319.

37 Hk 1.59.

38 Hk 1.76; SCT 186.

39 Reference unavailable. A similar statement is found in *Daśamūla-tattva,* chap. 1.

40 B.B. Tirtha. *Sri Chaitanya,* 198.

41 Śvetadvīpa Dāsa.

42 Gv 2.127. The chapter referred to is Cc 2.19.

43 Gv 3.172.

44 Letter (22 December 1927), *Patrāvalī* 1.43.

45 SB 1.1.13.

46 *Śikṣāṣṭaka* 3.

47 *Amūlya-vāṇī* 9.

48 *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 1.2.23; *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 3.2.3.

49 Gv 1.50.

50 Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, *Brāhmaṇa and Vaiṣṇava,* 61.

51 Letter (26 February 1928), *Patrāvalī* 2.20.

52 *Śrī Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭaka* 8.23, Cc 2.11.8.

53 Hk 2.8–9.

54 Letter (29 March 1926), *Patrāvalī* 2.48.

55 Gv 3.237.

56 "Tadvana," *Gauḍīya* 14.409–10.

The Great Drum

1 *Gauḍīya* 8.639.

2 *Harmonist* 29.364–65 (June 1932).

3 Told by his disciple Sadānanda Prabhu. See *Unknown India: A Pilgrimage Into a Forgotten*

World (New York: Ryder and Co., 1952; reprint, New York: Mandala Publishing Group, 1999), 110. This book is an English rendering of a book originally written in German by Walther Eidlitz (Vāmana Prabhu, a disciple of Bon Mahārāja). (See vol. 2, p. 402)

4 "Volcano of thoughts"—From *Relative Worlds.*

5 *Harmonist* 33.94–95 (24 December 1936).

6 *Harmonist* (August 1927), endpages.

7 *Harmonist* 30.30 (July 1932).

8 See *Gauḍīya* 13.344.

9 *Gauḍīya* 13.343.

10 *Harmonist* 31.505–9 (12 July 1935).

11 *See* Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, *Letters from Śrīla Prabhupāda,* 2.1056.

12 Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

13 Letter (15 Padmanābha, 429 Gaurābda [1915 A.D.]), *Patrāvalī* 1.3.

14 Letter (23 February 1934), Sj 208.

15 Letter (15 March 1915), *Patrāvalī* 2.2.

Use of Language

1 *Harmonist* 29.226 (February 1932).

2 Letter (22 December 1927), *Patrāvalī* 1.45.

3 *Harmonist* 30.326 (May 1933).

4 Letter (28 March 1933), *Patrāvalī* 2.134

5 Śvetadvīpa dāsa.

6 *Bhidyate hṛdaya-granthiś*—SB 1.2.21.

7 Letter (1 April 1926), *Patrāvalī* 2.21.

8 *Harmonist* 25.86–87 (September 1927).

9 From Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's introductory notes to his commentary on *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata.*

10 *Gauḍīya* 12.747.

11 SB 11.9.29.

12 *Gauḍīya* 6.320

13 Gv 3.224.

14 *Harmonist* 31.16–17 (4 September 1934).

15 SBT 155.

16 B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja's paraphrasing of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's usage.

17 SPU 333–34.

18 *Harmonist* 25.15 (June 1927).

19 Av 196–97; SPU 157–58.

20 Gv 3.115–16. This extract is recorded as having been spoken in English.

21 *Śrī Śrī Sarasvatī Saṁlāpa (*Allahabad), 130.

22 *Gauḍīya* 9.187–88; Hk 2.12–14.

23 SCT 350.

24 *Harmonist* 29.65–66 (September 1931).

Establishing Temples

1 Bidi anecdote—Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

2 Av 139; SPU 202.

3 For instance, in a lecture of 8 November 1936, quoted in *Gauḍīya* 15.23–24.8.

4 *Gauḍīya* 6.318–19.

Deity Worship

1 Gv 1.117.

2 Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

3 Adapted from the BBT rendition of SB 11.2.46, purport.

4 See *Bhakti-sandarbha* 273.16.

5 These last two sentences are quoted from *Gauḍīya* 9.30.506–7.

6 Gv 1.286.

7 Gv 1.286.

8 SBT 196.

Festivals

1 Av 18; SPU 130.

2 Gv 3.268.

3 Quoted in *Gauḍīya* 9.248.

4 *Gauḍīya* 15.251.

5 From Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's commentary on SB 11.19.39.

Theistic Exhibitions

1 *Harmonist* 30.217 (7 January 1933).

2 *Harmonist* 29.109 (October 1931).

3 *Harmonist* 29.141 (November 1931).

4 *Harmonist* 29.143 (November 1931).

5 Letter (19 September 1931), *Gauḍīya* 10.123.

6 *Harmonist* 29.154 (November 1931).

7 Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, *Vilāpa-kusumāñjali* 6.

8 *Harmonist* 30.278 (March 1933).

Dhāma-sevā

1 *Gauḍīya* 6.319–20.

2 *Harmonist* 28.41 (July 1930).

3 Letter (22 December 1927), *Patrāvalī* 1.42.

4 *Gauḍīya* 4.638–39; *Śrīla Prabhupādera Boktṛtābalī* 2.137–38.

5 B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja, quoted in *Śrī Chaitanya Saraswatī* magazine (10 March 1981), 92.

6 *Gauḍīya* 9.506–7.

7 "The Gauḍīya Maṭha," *Harmonist* 28.130 (October 1930).

8 Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, *Navadvīpa-dhāma-māhātmya, Parikramā-khaṇḍa,* chap. 4; *Gauḍīya* 13.525.

9 *Gauḍīya* 16th year (special Vyāsa-*pūjā* issue), 144.

10 Information re Anukūla-Kṛṣṇānuśīlanāgāra is from an article by that title in *Nadia Prakash* 10.3110 (21 February 1936).

11 Hk 3.11.

12 Cc 2.18.45–54.

13 Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

14 Letter (20 February 1920), *Patrāvalī* 2.30.

15 Gv 3.30.

16 Gv 3.31–35.

17 *Gauḍīya* 11.29.468.

18 This incident is briefly described in *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta* 1.63. Additional details not given therein are as related by Śrī Padmanābha Gosvāmī of Rādhā-ramaṇa-gherā and Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

19 *Gauḍīya* 11.14.215–16.

20 B.P. Yati, *Three Apostles,* 32–33.

21 Ibid.

22 Gv 1.279.

23 B.V. Bhāratī, *Śrī Gaura-harira Atyadbhuta-camatkārī Bhauma-līlāmṛta* 1.1–3, 1.246–47.

24 See Cc 1.17.221–22.

25 Cc 2.2.9.

26 Gv 2.117–18.

27 Told by Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

28 Letter (9 May 1929), *Patrāvalī* 2.61.

29 *Gauḍīya* 11.465.

30 *Rādhā-bhāva-dyuti-suvalita*—Cc 1.1.5.

31 *See* Mādhavānanda Dāsa, "The Esoteric Significance of the Deity of Alarnathdev," *Sri Krishna Kathamrita,* issue 5.

32 *Gauḍīya* 12.651.

33 B.R. Śrīdhara Swami, *The Golden Volcano of Divine Love,* 160–62.

Educational Projects

1 See *Gauḍīya* 17.448 and SPU 46.

2 *Harmonist* 28.127 (September 1930).

3 Gv 1.59.

4 *Harmonist* 25.176 (January 1928).

5 *Gauḍīya* 9.56.

6 Hk 3.16–17.

7 Lecture (21 January 1936), Gv 1.283.

8 *Harmonist* 31.396 (29 April 1935).

9 *Gauḍīya* 12.747.

Collection and Spending

1 Sj 237.

2 *Conversations with Śrīla Prabhupāda* 20.113.

3 Sj 237–38.

4 "Vaiṣṇava Ke?" 12.

5 *Īśopaniṣad* 1.

6 *Harmonist* 33.93 (24 December 1936).

7 *Gauḍīya* 15.23–24.8.

8 Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

9 *Letters from Śrīla Prabhupāda* 4.2202–23.

10 Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

11 *Gauḍīya* 11.346–47.

12 *Gauḍīya* 14.172.

13 Sj 238.

14 *Gauḍīya* 15.233.

15 Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

Altruism and Charity

1 Av 102–3; SPU 174.

2 SPU 286.

3 Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

4 SBT 155; *Gauḍīya* 15.23–24.8.

5 Amandodayā dayā—culled from *Śrī Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭaka* 8.10 and quoted as Cc 2.10.119. For Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's explanation of this term, see his commentary on Cc 2.10.119.

6 SCT 241.

7 The above section is culled from Av 114–16 and SPU 306–8.

8 Av 146.

9 Av 269; SPU 322.

10 Gv 1.49–50.

11 SPU 137.

12 *Gauḍīya* 12.767–68.

13 SJ 26.

14 SCT 244.

15 Collated from "Sree Alalnath Artasram," *Harmonist* 33.85–90 (24 December 1936)

Coping with Thieves

1 Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

Regarding Women

1 Told on several occasions by Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, e.g., during a lecture of 2 October 1966. (*Collected Lectures on Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* 5.665)

2 *Letters from Śrīla Prabhupāda* 3.1403.

3 SPU 366.

4 *Gauḍīya* 12.500.

5 *Gauḍīya* 16.11.256.

6 Lecture (21 September 1925), Sj 345–46; Hk 1.19–20.

7 Letter (25 June 1929), *Patrāvalī* 2.68.

8 Lecture (21 September 1925), Sj 345.

Mahā-prasāda

1 SCT 360–62.

2 SBT 170.

3 Letter (19 October 1933), Sj 208.

4 Gv 2.169–70.

5 Culled from Sj 19 and Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

6 *Gauḍīya Prabandha-mālā* 2.234–35.

Regulative Observances

1 Cc 1.15.10, commentary.

2 *Gauḍīya* 26.399; Gv 3.216–17.

Health Issues

1 Letter (24 December 1930), *Patrāvalī* 2.83.

2 Letter (3 November 1931), *Patrāvalī* 2.102.

3 Letter (29 October 1934), *Patrāvalī* 3.34.

4 *Amūlya Vāṇī* 15.

Further Instructions and Anecdotes

1 Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

2 Ibid.

3 *Satyaṁ... apriyam—Manu-saṁhitā* 4.138.

4 "Śrī Kṛṣṇera Aṣṭottara-śata nāma."

5 *Gauḍīya* 13.608–9.

6 This poetry appears to be an original composition by Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. *Sattvaṁ... śabditam*—SB 4.3.23.

7 Letter (5 August 1926), *Patrāvalī* 1.19.

His Eternal Form and Internal Ecstasy

1 *Śrī Guru-preṣṭha* 9.

2 This statement by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is recorded in Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's poetic envoy to his *Anuvṛtti* gloss on *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta.*

3 Gv 1.62.

4 Letter (17 October 1928), *Patrāvalī* 1.46; *Gauḍīya* 13.214; Gv 3.37.

5 This is an edited version of an extended explanatory translation by B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja.

6 As told by B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja.

7 This incident is described in Gv 2.154–56.

8 See SB 10.30.38.

9 *Gauḍīya* 13.214; Gv 3.38.

10 *Prārthanā.*

Sanskrit/Bengali Pronunciation Guide

Used within this book is a standard transliteration system accepted by scholars that approximates Sanskrit sounds. Most Bengali words transliterated herein are also rendered according to this system (employed in the publications of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda), even though the pronunciation of some Bengali letters differs significantly from their Sanskrit equivalents. Bengali and Oriya also differ from Sanskrit in not being entirely phonetic. Much of the Sanskrit quoted in this book was spoken by Bengalis and Oriyas, who would have pronounced it in their characteristically distinctive manner.

In both Sanskrit and Bengali, long vowels are indicated by a line above the letter representing it.

In Sanskrit, the short vowel **a** is pronounced like the *u* in *trust,* long **ā** as in *sari.* Short **i** is pronounced as in *bliss,* long **ī** as in *unique;* short **u** as in *flute,* long **ū** like the *oo* in *moo.*

The vowel **ṛ** is pronounced like the *ri* in *Krishna;* **e** as in *they* or sometimes as in *pen;* **ai** as in *aisle;* **o** and **au** as in *glow* and *beau.*

The *anusvāra* (**ṁ**), a pure nasal sound, is pronounced as in the French word *bon;* the *visarga* (**ḥ**), a strong aspirate, like a final **h** sound. At the end of a couplet, **aḥ** is pronounced *aha,* **iḥ** pronounced *ihi,* etc.

The guttural consonants **k, kh, g, gh,** and **ṅ** are pronounced from the throat in much the same manner as in English—**k** as in *kind,* **kh** as in *pack-horse,* **g** as in *god,* **gh** as in *bighearted,* and **ṅ** as in *sing.*

The palatal consonants **c, ch, j, jh,** and **ñ** are pronounced: **c** as in *chant,* **ch** as in *thatch hut,* **j** as in *joy,* **jh** as in *bridgehead,* and **ñ** as in *banyan.*

The retroflex consonants **ṭ, ṭh, ḍ, ḍh,** and **ṇ,** and also the rare vowel **ḷ**, are pronounced with the tip of the tongue turned up and drawn back against the dome of the palate: **ṭ** as in *temple,* **ṭh** as in *light-hearted,* **ḍ** as in *devotee,* **ḍh** as in *Godhead,* **ṇ** as in *nectar,* and **ḷ** as in *love.*

The dental consonants **t, th, d, dh** and **n** are pronounced in the same manner as the celebrals, but with the tip of the tongue against the inside of the upper teeth.

The labial consonants **p, ph, b, bh,** and **m** are pronounced with the lips: **p** as in *perfect,* **ph** as in *uphold,* **b** as in *boon,* **bh** as in *subhead,* and **m** as in *mantra.*

The semivowels **y, r, l,** and **v** are pronounced as in *yoga, respect, love,* and *vow*.

The sibilants **s, ṣ,** and **ś** are pronounced: **s** as in *soul,* **ṣ** as in *shine* but with the tip of the tongue

turned up and drawn back against the dome of the palate, and **ś** as in *shine* but the tip of the tongue against the inside of the upper teeth.

Bengali and Oriya sounds that are pronounced differently from Sanskrit are:

Short **a** is pronounced like the *o* in the Southern British pronunciation of *hot;* **ai** like the *oy* in *boy.* In Bengali, the final **a** of many words is silent.

When between two vowels, **ḍ** is pronounced similarly to the *r* in *red;* **ph** is pronounced as *f;* **v** is pronounced as *b,* except after *s, ṣ,* or *ś,* when it becomes almost silent.

M is pronounced as in *mantra,* except after *s, ṣ, ś,* and *kṣ,* in which cases it becomes almost silent, and after *d, ḍ, ḍh, dha, t, th, ṭ,* and *ṭh,* when it becomes almost silent and doubles the consonant it follows (e.g., *padma* is pronounced approximately *padda*).

When at the beginning of a word, and after *l* and *r,* **y** is pronounced as *j.* After other consonants, it becomes almost silent and doubles the consonant it follows (e.g., *anya* is approximately pronounced *anna*). After vowels it is pronounced as in *prayer.*

S, ṣ, and **ś** are each pronounced as in *she;* and **kṣa** as *kha.*

Glossary

Text within quotation marks immediately following an entry word is a literal translation thereof. Only contextual meanings of Sanskrit words are given.

108—*See* **Aṣṭottara-śata.**

A—*(Sanskrit)* a prefix denoting negation. Examples: *asat*—false, not *sat* (real); *acit*—material, not *cit* (conscious). When preceding a vowel, the prefix becomes *an.* Examples: *anartha*—an obstruction to *artha* (that which is desirable); *anitya*—temporary, not *nitya* (eternal).

Abhakti—non-*bhakti;* the opposite or absence of devotional service.

Abhidheya—"to be named or mentioned"; (1) devotional service; (2) *sādhana-bhakti. See also* **Prayojana; Sādhana-bhakti; Sambandha.**

Absolute Truth—an English rendering of *Brahman;* (1) the ultimate source of everything; (2) the supreme independent reality. *See also* **Supreme Personality of Godhead.**

Ācāra—behavior, especially that in accord with *śāstra-vidhi. See also* **Sadācāra.**

Ācārya—(1) a guru who has realized the import of *śāstra,* and by practice and precept establishes *siddhānta* and *ācāra;* (2) institutional head of a *sampradāya* or religious institution; (3) name or a part thereof for teachers, or persons descended from teachers.

(His Divine Grace) A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami (Śrīla) Prabhupāda—(1896–1977) the founder-*ācārya* of ISKCON, and most prominent of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's disciples in the era after his disappearance.

Acintya—inconceivable.

Acintya-bhedābheda-tattva—the doctrine of inconceivable simultaneous oneness and difference (of Godhead and His energies, and forms of Godhead); the philosophical system taught by Lord Caitanya. *See also* **Tattva.**

Adhikāra—qualification, level of eligibility.

Adhikārī—"eligible person"; (1) an epithet denoting a devotee's level of spiritual advancement, as in *kaniṣtha-, madhyama-, and uttama-adhikārī* (see individual terms); (2) designation of a married male devotee, as in the name Kṛṣṇa dāsa Adhikārī.

Adhokṣaja—"imperceptible to mundane vision"; Bhagavān.

Ādi-Śaṅkarācārya—(686–718) the original Śaṅkarācārya, as distinguished from *ācāryas* in

his guru-*paramparā,* who to this day also use the title Śaṅkarācārya.

Ādi-Varāha—"the original boar," the boar avatar of Lord Viṣṇu.

Advaita—"nonduality," oneness; (1) a name for the Supreme Lord; (2) *advaita-vāda.*

Advaita (Ācārya/Prabhu)—an avatar of the Supreme Lord, and an intimate associate of Lord Caitanya.

Advaita-vāda—*See* **Māyāvāda.**

Advaya—*(adj.)* nondual, absolute.

Advaya-jñāna—(1) knowledge that there is no difference between Kṛṣṇa and His names, forms, qualities, weapons, and so on, and that anything pertaining to Him is of the same spiritual nature; (2) the object of that knowledge, who is nondifferent from it, namely Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This meaning is often conveyed by the term *advaya-jñāna-tattva* (see SB 1.2.11).

Āgama—a class of scripture, complementary to the original Vedas, that sets forth theology and practical directions on worship. The Āgamas are classified according to three categories: Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva, and Śākta.

Agha, Baka, Pūtanā—three demons who entered Vṛndāvana and were killed by Kṛṣṇa.

Ahaṅgrahopāsanā—a strain of impersonalism whereby the worshiper accepts or conceptualizes himself as identical to the object of worship. (*Aham*—I; *g raha*—accepting; *upāsanā*—worship)

Ajña-rūḍhi—"the meaning (*rūḍhi*) of a word accepted by the less intelligent (*ajña*)"; the conventional, external meaning of a word. *See also* **Vidvad-rūḍhi.**

Ākhḍā—temple with residential quarters for renunciants, particularly of the type inhabited by *bābājīs* in Bengal and Orissa. *See also* **Maṭha.**

Akiñcana—possessionless. A synonym of *niṣkiñcana.*

Alaṅkāra-śāstra—the body of Vedic works that discuss *kavya* (poetry), which is defined as *rasātmika-vākya* (words having *rasa* as their essence). Thus discussion of *rasa* is necessary in the study of poetry. (*Alaṅkāra*— decoration)

Ālvār—one of twelve celebrated ancient saints of the Śrī *sampradāya.*

Āmnāya—the message of *śāstra* as received through *paramparā.*

Ānanda—happiness.

Anartha—"(that which is) useless or harmful"; in Gauḍīya theology it denotes an activity, attitude, or tendency that is an impediment to devotional advancement (e.g., gambling, lust).

Anartha-nivṛtti—(1) the stage in devotional advancement in which *anarthas* are transcended and overcome; (2) disappearance of all unwanted contamination within the heart. *See also* **Artha-pravṛtti.**

Annakūṭa—annual festival held to celebrate Govardhana-*pūjā,* Kṛṣṇa's worship of Govardhana. Cooked rice (*anna*) is stacked to resemble a hill (*kūṭa*—pile), and many other preparations are made for the Lord's pleasure.

Antaryāmī—*See* **Paramātmā.**

Anvaya—(1) the natural sequence of words; (2) *(in Sanskrit exegesis)* words of verses syntactically repositioned and presented in prose, to make their meaning clearer.

Anyābhilāṣa—any desire other than for satisfying Kṛṣṇa. (*Anya*—other; *abhilāṣa*—desire)*

Anyābhilāṣī—a person cultivating desires other than to serve Kṛṣṇa.

Aparādha—offense. *See also* **Nāmāparādha; Vaiṣṇava-aparādha.**

Apa-sampradāya—deviant sect. *See also* *Sampradāya.*

Apa-siddhānta—incorrect philosophical conclusion. *See also* **Siddhānta.**

Appearance—Āvirbhāva (q.v.).

Aprākṛta—"transcendental to matter."

Ārati—(in Bengali, Hindi, and other Indian languages; derived from the Sanskrit word *ārātrika*) ceremony of worship (most commonly performed in public or household temples for worship of deities), the essential part of which is offering a lighted ghee- or oil-lamp by waving or circling it before the worshiped person or object. Often other items, such as incense, water, flowers, and fans, are also offered, and accompanying mantras chanted.

Arcana—procedures for worship, especially of the deity of the Lord. *See also* **Deity; Pūjā.**

Ardha Kumbha-melā—*See* **Kumbha-melā.**

Arjuna—the devotee and intimate friend to whom Kṛṣṇa spoke *Bhagavad-gītā.*

Artha—purpose, motive, meaning, reason, money, etc. *See also* **Dharma-artha-kāma-mokṣa.**

Artha-pravṛtti—(1) progress toward the actual goal of life; (2) realization of and entrance into one's eternal position of servitude to Kṛṣṇa and entrance into His pastimes. *See also* **Anartha-nivṛtti.**

Ārya—(1) respectable, righteous person; (2) one interested in higher values of life and in advancing spiritually; (3) upper-caste person of North India; (4) member of the Ārya Samāj.

Āsana—sitting mat, sitting place, seat, place.

Asat—incorrect, improper, bad, false, ephemeral, non-existent, untrue.

Asat-saṅga—unholy association.

Āśīrvāda-patra—certificate of blessing.

Āśrama—any of the four spiritual orders in the Vedic social system: *brahmacarya, gṛhastha, vānaprastha,* and *sannyāsa. See also* **Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Āśraya—(1) shelter; (2) a receptacle or recipient in which any quality or article is retained or received.

Āśraya-vigraha—"the form of the recipient," the receptacle of *prema*; (1) Śrī Rādhā; (2) one's own guru; (3) any advanced devotee.* *See also* **Viṣaya-vigraha.**

Aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā—pastimes of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa during the eight periods of the day, different activities being performed during different periods, as outlined in *Govinda-līlāmṛta* and other confidential works; the highest object of contemplation for Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.

Aṣṭottara-śata—"108." It is considered an auspicious number and appears in many contexts. For instance, there are 108 principal *Upaniṣads,* 108 principal *gopīs,* 108 beads in the standard rosary of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, and many compilations of 108 names for various deities.

Asura—(1) person of demonic mentality, specifically one who is opposed to Viṣṇu and Viṣṇu-*bhakti;* (2) one of the cosmic demonic beings often referred to in the Vedic literature.

Avatar—(Sanskrit: *avatāra*—descent) (1) descent from the spiritual world of the Supreme Lord or a special devotee; (2) a personage thus descended.

Avidyā—ignorance.

Āvirbhāva—Vaiṣṇava terminology for the apparent birth of a Viṣṇu-avatar or an exalted devotee, in contradistinction to the birth of conditioned souls forced into various material bodies according to their karmic reactions. Rendered in English as *appearance,* because such eternal personages, rather than coming into existence, become manifest to mortal vision like the appearance of the sun each morning. *See also* **Tirobhāva.**

Āvirbhāva-tithi—anniversary of the appearance of a Viṣṇu-avatar or an exalted devotee. *See also* **Tirobhāva-tithi; Tithi.**

Bābājī—(1) a celibate devotee who lives extremely simply and austerely, his life devoted to spiritual practices; (2) an imitator who accepts the simple dress of a *bābājī* yet does not practice the prescribed rigid renunciation. *See also* **Bhek**.

Babu—(1) *(especially in Bengali society)* an honorific appellation for an esteemed gentleman; (2) (a) a foppish well-to-do sense enjoyer, or (b) *(Gauḍīya Maṭha usage; informal, derogatory)* a materialistic devotee whose behavior resembles that of sense enjoyers.

Bāg-bazar—the area of Calcutta to which Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha relocated in 1930.

Bāhādura—"hero";common appendage to titles of men of *kṣatriya* caste or in high administrative posts.

(Śrīla) Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa—(eighteenth century) a prominent Gauḍīya *ācārya* best known for his composition of *Govinda-bhāṣya* (q.v.).

Bāla-Gopāla—(1) Kṛṣṇa in boyhood; (2) common deity form of Kṛṣṇa in boyhood.

Bali-dāna—offering of goats and other animals in sacrifice to certain demigods.

Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣad—Bengali Literature Association.

Bhadra-loka—the modernized Bengali middle class, a social elite that first emerged in the mid-nineteenth century. (*Bhadra*—gentle, polite)

Bhagavad-gītā—sacred teachings of Kṛṣṇa spoken to Arjuna on the Battlefield of Kuruksetra, which expound devotional service as the essence and ultimate goal of all knowledge, and the only means to attain the highest spiritual perfection.

Bhagavān—"possessor of all opulences in full";(1) Supreme Personality of Godhead; (2) highly exalted personality.

Bhāgavat(a)—"in relation to Bhagavān";(1) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam;* (2) great devotee.

Bhāgavata-dharma—"practices of great devotees" or "dharma in relation to Bhagavān";Kṛṣṇa consciousness, pure devotional service.

Bhāi—brother.

Bhajana—(1) dedicated life of intense devotional service based on hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa and remembering Him; (2) *(mainly Hindi usage)* devotional song.

Bhajana-kuṭīra—a hut used normally by a single sadhu for his residence and *bhajana.*

Bhajanānandī—"one who takes pleasure in *bhajana*";a devotee who withdraws from the world to concentrate on devotional practices. *See also* **Nirjana-bhajana**.

Bhakta—a devotee of the Supreme Lord. *See also* **Vaiṣṇava.**

Bhakti—*See* **Devotional Service.**

Bhakti Bhavan—Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's house in Calcutta.

Bhakti-kuṭī—"cottage of devotion";Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's place of *bhajana* and residence in Purī.

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu—(The ocean of the nectar of devotional mellows) Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's definitive treatise on the science of devotional service.

Bhakti-ratnākara—(The jewel-mine of devotion) a seventeenth-century biography of Lord Caitanya and some of His principal associates, by Śrī Narahari Cakravartī.

Bhakti Vijaya Bhavan—Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's house at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha.

(Śrīla) Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura—(1838–1915) the inaugurator of the modern-day *śuddha-bhakti* movement, and the father of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Bhārata(-varṣa)—the *śāstrīya* name for India.

Bhāṣya—commentary, especially the original commentary, on a scripture.

Bhāva—emotion, mood, attitude, feeling. In Gauḍīya theology it also refers to the initial stage of ecstatic feelings preceding the full manifestion of *prema*.

Bhavan(a)—house, residence, building, mansion.

Bhava-sāgara—"the ocean of material existence." *See also* **Sāgara.**

Bhāvuka—"a person imbued with *bhāva*";*(common usage)* a sentimentalist.

Bhek—apparel, particularly the simple short cloth worn by *bābājīs.* "Giving *bhek*" means to induct into *bābājī* life.

Bhikṣā—(1) the act of begging or requesting, particularly a renunciant's practice of begging door to door for alms; (2) alms collected by such begging; (3) a renunciant's acceptance of a meal in a householder's home.

Bhikṣu—"beggar";mendicant or sannyasi.

Bhoga—(1) material enjoyment; (2) items specifically meant to be offered for the Lord's enjoyment, such as food or flowers.

Bhogī—an enjoyer.

Bodily conception (of life)—the basic misapprehension of every materially conditioned living entity that the body is the self and that life is meant only for maintenance of, and enjoyment through and in relation to, the body.

(Lord) Brahmā—the demigod who is the first created living being and secondary creator in each material universe. In this particular universe, he is also the original preceptor of the Brahma-Mādhva-Gauḍīya *sampradāya,* the discipular line descending from himself through Madhvācārya to Lord Caitanya and beyond.

Brahmacārī—a member of the first order of Vedic spiritual life (*brahmacarya*), i.e., a celibate student of a guru. *See also* **Āśrama; Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Brahmacarya—celibate student life, the first *āśrama* of the Vedic social system. *See also* **Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Brahma-gāyatrī—the most prominent Vedic mantra for worshiping the Supreme Lord. It is also called Veda-mātā (mother of the Vedas). *See also* **Gāyatrī.**

Brahmajyoti—the spiritual effulgence emanating from the transcendental body of Lord Kṛṣṇa and illuminating the spiritual world. *See also* **Brahman.**

Brāhma-muhūrta—the period of day, auspicious for spiritual practices, spanning from approximately ninety to forty-five minutes before sunrise.

Brahman—(1) Absolute Truth; (2) the state of spiritual existence; (3) the impersonal all-pervasive aspect of the Absolute Truth.

Brāhmaṇa—(1) a priest or intellectual fixed in *sattva-guṇa* and knowledge of Brahman, and thus qualified as a member of the first occupational division of the Vedic social system; (2) erroneous designation of a certain caste or members thereof claiming to be *brāhmaṇas* solely on the basis of heredity. *See also* **Varṇa; Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Brāhmaṇatva—the status of being a *brāhmaṇa.*

Brāhmaṇī—wife of a *brāhmaṇa.*

Brahma-rākṣasa—a powerful and malicious ghost of a *brāhmaṇa.*

Brahma-saṁhitā—an ancient scripture (only the fifth chapter of which is extant) highly regarded by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Brahmo—a member of the Brahmo Samāj, a religious group formed in Bengal in the nineteenth century. (See vol. 2, pp. 3–4)

Cādar—shawl.

Caitanya-bhāgavata—the Bengali biography by Śrīla Vṛṇdāvana dāsa Ṭhākura (completed in 1575) about Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, principally describing His pastimes in Navadvīpa before He accepted *sannyāsa*.

Caitanya-caritāmṛta—the Bengali biography composed by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī (some forty years after *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*) about Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, principally describing His pastimes after He accepted *sannyāsa.*

Caitanya Mahāprabhu—(1486–1534) recognized by Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas to be the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, manifested as His own devotee to impart love of Himself, especially by *saṅkīrtana.* He is the root of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma and is the Gauḍīyas' object of worship. In English He is often referred to as Lord Caitanya.

(Śrī) Caitanya Maṭha—established in 1918 in Māyāpur by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, this became the parent Maṭha of subsequent branches of the original Gauḍīya Maṭha organization. Today it remains the headquarters of one of the two entities spawned by the first bifurcation of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's institution.

Caṇḍāla—an outcaste of the lowest category.

Caraṇāmṛta—water, sometimes mixed with other substances, that was used to bathe either the Lord (usually in His deity form) or the feet of a devotee.

Caritra—character, biography.

Caste Goswamis—(Bengali: *jāta-gosāñis)* seminal descendants of the principal followers of Lord Caitanya who claim the right to initiate disciples solely on the basis of that identification.

Cātur-māsya—"four-month period";the four months, roughly coincident with the rainy season, during which special austerities are observed by followers of Vedic culture.

Chand Kazi—a Muslim magistrate of Nadia who had initially opposed Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement but whose mind changed after discussing with the Lord. (See Cc 1.17)

Conditioned—*(Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's usage)* pertaining or subject to the conditions of material life.

(Indian National) Congress—the predominant organization seeking Indian independence from British rule.

Dā—*(Bengali)* suffix appended to a name of an elder brother or a male of similar status, connoting both affection and respect.

Daiva-varṇāśrama-dharma—the authentic caste system, based not on birth (in contradistinction to *āsura-varṇāśrama,* prominent in Kali-yuga) but on one's qualities and activities. *See also* **Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Dakṣiṇā—an offering, in cash or kind, presented to a guru, a *brāhmaṇa,* or a similarly worshipable person.

Daṇḍa—(1) stick; (2) staff carried by a sannyasi. *See also* **Ekadaṇḍa; Tridaṇḍa.**

Daṇḍavat—"like a rod." In Bengali, this word is used for *daṇḍavat-praṇāma* (prostration offered by falling flat on the ground).

Darśana—(1) vision; (2) philosophy, or a philosophical system; (3) audience of the Supreme Lord or His representative.

Dāsa—*(generally lowercase)* (1) servant; (2) surname given to a devotee at initiation, denoting him as a servant of Kṛṣṇa; (3) *(capital)* family name in Bengal and Orissa.

Daśakam—poem consisting of ten verses.

Dāsya-rasa—the mellow of affectionate servitude. *See also* **Rasa.**

Deity—(1) the manifestation of the Supreme Lord as a scripturally authorized form for accepting worship; (2) worshipable forms of pure devotees and demigods. The deity form of the Lord appears in eight materials: stone, wood, metal, earth, paint, sand, the mind, or jewels (see SB 11.27.12).

Demigod—a resident of the higher planets. Principal demigods are assigned roles by the Supreme Lord for overseeing universal affairs, and are worshiped for material boons by materialistic followers of Vedic culture.

Desire tree—a spiritual tree that fulfils the desires of its supplicants.

Deva—(1) the Supreme Lord, a demigod, or a godly person; (2) honorific suffix for the Supreme Lord, a demigod, or a godly male.

Devī—(1) goddess or godly female; (2) honorific suffix for a goddess or godly female.

Devotional service—the process of worshiping the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī

Kṛṣṇa, by dedicating one's thoughts, words, and actions to Him in loving submission. *See also* **Kṛṣṇa consciousness.**

Dhāma—the transcendental abode of the Lord, eternally existing as the spiritual world beyond the material universes and also manifested within the material world as certain holy places.

Dharma—(1) religious laws described in *śāstra;* (2) ordained duties as described in *śāstra* for specific roles within *varṇāśrama* society, e.g., *sannyāsa-dharma, strī-dharma* (women's duties); (3) every living being's eternal, constitutional occupation of service to the Supreme Lord. *See also* **Dharma-artha-kāma-mokṣa.**

Dharma-artha-kāma-mokṣa—*(conventional usage)* mundane piety, economic development, sense enjoyment, and liberation, the four aspects of sub-transcendental Vedic religious endeavor.

Dharmaśālā—charitable lodge for pilgrims.

Dhārmika—adjectival form of (the word) *dharma.*

Dīkṣā—initiation. In the Gauḍīya Maṭha, *dīkṣā* refers to what in ISKCON is known as "second" or *brāhmaṇa* initiation.

Dīkṣā-guru—initiating spiritual master.

Dīkṣita—(1) a person who has received *dīkṣā;* (2) the state of having received *dīkṣā.*

Disappearance—*tirobhāva* (q.v.).

District—administrative subunits established by the British in the provinces of India. Most were named after the headquarters of jurisdiction (for instance, the headquarters of Jessore District was the town of Jessore).

Duḥkha—unhappiness, misery, suffering, pain.

Durgā—Lord Śiva's consort, the goddess personifying and overseeing the material energy, who is worshiped by materialists for material boons. *See also* **Māyā.**

Dust—Gauḍīyas highly regard particles of earth taken from holy places or the lotus feet of elevated devotees. Placing such dust on one's head and/ or tongue demonstrates submission and humility and is recommended in scripture (e.g., SB 5.12.12 and Cc 3.16.60) as important for spiritual progress.

Dvāpara-yuga—the third in the universal cycle of four ages, characterized by a further one-fourth decrease in *dhārmika* principles from the preceding age, Tretā-yuga (q.v.).

Ekadaṇḍa—the symbolic staff composed of one (*eka*) bamboo rod (*daṇḍa*) carried by sannyasis of the Mādhva and Śaṅkara schools.

Ekadaṇḍī—"one with an *ekadaṇḍa*";a sannyasi of the Mādhva or Śaṅkara *sampradāya.*

Ekādaśa-bhāva—the eleven characteristics of a devotee in the perfectional stage of directly serving Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in a spiritual body as a maidservant.

Ekādaśī—eleventh day of both the waxing and waning moon, most favorable for cultivating Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti,* during which Vaiṣṇavas increase their spiritual practices and fast from at least grains and beans.

Enchantress—*(Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's usage)* when used without a qualifier, refers to the personality of illusion, Māyā (q.v.).

Flat-rice—(Bengali: *ciḍā*) pre-boiled and pounded rice needing only a few minutes of soaking to become edible, thus a simple and commonplace preparation.

Gadādhara—"club-holder";a name for the Supreme Lord.

Gadādhara Paṇḍita—a specific associate and the internal potency of Lord Caitanya.

Gāndharvikā—Rādhā, the source of Gāndharva-*vidyā* (arts and skills such as music and dancing), whereby She pleases Kṛṣṇa unlimitedly.

Gaṇeśa—the elephant-headed demigod. A son of Lord Śiva, he is supplicated for material opulence and removing obstacles to material endeavors, and is the scribe who recorded the *Mahābhārata.*

Gaṅgā—Ganges River.

Garuḍa—the eagle who is the carrier of Lord Viṣṇu.

Garuḍa-stambha—at the entrance to a Viṣṇu temple, the column bearing the form of Garuḍa.

Gauḍa, Gauḍa-deśa, Gauḍa-maṇḍala—the historical and spiritual name for the region roughly corresponding to West Bengal, India, particularly denoting it as a principal place of pastimes of Lord Caitanya and His associates.

Gauḍīya—*(commonly understood meanings)* (1) of or pertaining to Gauḍa, an ancient city in Bengal; (2) pertaining to the Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* derived from Lord Caitanya (e.g., Gauḍīya *siddhānta*); (3) a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava; (4) the erstwhile flagship periodical of the Gauḍīya Maṭha; *(esoteric meaning)* (5) a devotee of Rādhārāṇī.

Gauḍīya Maṭha—(1) the organization founded by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī; (2) a

branch monastery of the aforesaid organization; (3) the generic term for the diaspora of organizations consisting of the first two branches that sundered from the original Gauḍīya Maṭha, and for subsequent groups (other than ISKCON) formed by discipular descendants of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī; (4) a branch monastery of the aforementioned diaspora.

Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava—(1) a member of the Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* originating from Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu; (2) of or pertaining to that *sampradāya.*

Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma, Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism—the practice and culture of devotional service in pursuance of the principles given by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Gaura, Gauracandra, Gaurahari, Gaurāṅga, Gaurasundara—names of Lord Caitanya referring to His beautiful golden form.

Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā—the book by Śrī Kavi-karṇapūra (written 1567 AD) that reveals the identities in Kṛṣṇa-*līlā* of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's principal associates.

Gaura-jayantī, Gaura-paurṇamāsī, Gaura-pūrṇimā—the *āvirbhāva-tithi* of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the full-moon day in the month of Phālguna. (*Paurṇamāsī, pūrṇimā*—full-moon day)

(Śrīla) Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī—(1838–1915) the guru of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Gaura-nāgarīs, Gaurāṅga-nāgarīs—a heretic Gauḍīya sect.

Gāyatrī—a mantra recited within the mind by suitably initiated persons at sunrise, midday, and sunset. *See also* **Brahma-gāyatrī.**

Giridhārī—a name of Kṛṣṇa meaning "the lifter of Govardhana Hill."

Gītā—*Bhagavad-gītā.*

Gīta-govinda—a highly esoteric and transcendentally erotic poem composed by Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī (c. eleventh century) that describes intimate pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Its verses and themes were repeatedly heard, sung, and meditated on by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and inspired the composition of innumerable Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *kīrtanas.*

Gītāvalī—a collection of songs by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

Godhead—*See* Absolute Truth.

Godruma, Godrumadvīpa—an area of Navadvīpa-*dhāma.* Therein Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura constructed his residence and place of *bhajana* named Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja.

Gokula—(1) Vṛndāvana manifested within the material world as a facsimile of Goloka; (2) in Vraja-*maṇḍala,* the particular village that was the site of Kṛṣṇa's residence during much of His childhood.

Goloka, Goloka Vṛndāvana—the topmost section of the spiritual world.

Goloka-darśana—spiritual outlook.

(Śrīla) Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī—one of the Six Gosvāmīs. He is known as the *smṛty-ācārya* of the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* for compiling *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* and *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā* (books of rituals and ceremonies for Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas).

Gopī—a female cowherd, particularly one of the spiritual cowherd damsels who serve Kṛṣṇa in Goloka or Gokula.

Gopījanavallabha, Gopīvallabha—names of Kṛṣṇa meaning "lover of the *gopīs.*"

Gopīśvara—an epithet of Lord Śiva, and particularly a form that is worshiped in a specific temple in Mahāvana, Vraja-*maṇḍala.* The name means that he is the form of Lord Śiva (*īśvara*) as worshiped by the *gopīs.*

Gopīvallabhpur—the seat of the Śyāmānandī sect (q.v.)

Gosvāmī—(1) one who fully controls his senses; (2) title designating a sannyasi; (3) adjective denoting the Six Gosvāmīs.

Gosvāmī literature—that written by the Six Gosvāmīs. It may also indicate works of other major Gauḍīya *ācāryas,* especially Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura and those preceding him.

Goswami—a surname of families often claiming spiritual privilege on the basis of birth. *See also* **Caste Goswamis**.

Govardhana—(1) the especially sacred hill within Vraja-*maṇḍala* that is nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa; (2) the village adjacent to Govardhana Hill.

Govardhana-śilā, Giridhārī-śilā—any stone from Govardhana Hill. Many Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas worship such *śilās.*

Govinda—a name of Kṛṣṇa meaning "He who gives pleasure to the land, the cows, and the senses."

Govinda-bhāṣya—the gloss on *Vedānta-sūtra* compiled by the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa Prabhu.

Govinda-līlāmṛta—the seminal work by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī **that** details Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā. See also* **Aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā.**

Grantha—book.

Gṛhastha—(1) a married person acting in accordance with Vedic religious principles for the purpose of spiritual elevation; (2) the second *āśrama* of Vedic spiritual life. *See also* **Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Guṇa—(1) attribute, quality; (2) one of the three cosmic behavorial influences—i) goodness (*sattva*), ii) passion (*rajas)*, and iii) ignorance (*tamas*)—characterized respectively by i) detachment, serenity, and spiritual inclination; ii) attachment and inordinate endeavor for sense gratification; and iii) madness, indolence, and sleep. These are described in considerable depth in *Bhagavad-gītā.*

Guru-Gaurāṅga—guru and Gaurāṇga. Here *guru* principally refers to one's immediate guru. In the Gauḍīya Maṭha, deities of Guru-Gaurāṅga are usually presented as a wooden form of Gaurāṇga and a pictorial image of the guru(s).

Gurukula—a guru's ashram, wherein young *brahmacārīs* reside and receive education.

Guru-paramparā—the chain of preceptorial succession from guru to disciple to granddisciple, and so on, through which transcendental knowledge is conveyed. *See* **Sampradāya.**

Guru-varga—present and previous gurus taken as a collective group. (*Varga*— division, class, set, group)

Gurvaṣṭaka—eight prayers composed by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura in glorification of the guru.

Halavā—dessert made from semolina (or other grain), ghee, sugar, and water.

Hanumān—the most famous monkey-servant of Lord Rāma.

Hare—(1) vocative form of *Harā* (Lord Kṛṣṇa's internal energy, i.e., Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī); (2) vocative form of *Hari.*

Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra—the great incantation for deliverance: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Hari—"He who takes away [obstacles to spiritual progress]";the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Hari-bhakti-vilāsa—the treatise composed by Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī that delineates and explains rules, regulations, and rituals for Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.

Harijana—"a person of God";(1) a devotee, (2) a common misnomer for an outcaste or low-class person.

Hari-kathā—discussion of the glories, activities, and qualities of Hari. *See* **Kṛṣṇa-kathā.**

Harināma—(1) the holy name(s) of the Supreme Lord; (2) initiation by a guru into the chanting of the holy name (known in ISKCON as "first initiation").

Harināmāmṛta-vyākaraṇa—"the grammar which is comprised of the nectar of the holy names";an instructional Sanskrit grammar composed by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī.

Harināma-saṅkīrtana—*See* Saṅkīrtana.

Harmonist—the English magazine of the Gauḍīya Maṭha at the time of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.

Himācala—another name for the Himālayas.

Hiraṇyakaśipu—the ancient despot infamous for persecuting his five-year-old son, Prahlāda, because of Prahlāda's Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti*.

Impersonalism—*See* Māyāvāda.

Initiation—*See* Dīkṣā.

ISKCON—International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Founded in 1966 in New York by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, it is the principal manifestation of what is popularly known as the Hare Krishna movement.

Iṣṭa-goṣṭhī—discussion of spiritual topics among devotees of similar ideals.

Īśvara—"controller";in general Hindu usage, often denotes Lord Śiva as the controller of the material energy; particularly in Vaiṣṇava parlance, refers to the Supreme Lord, Hari.

(Śrīla) Īśvara Purī—a disciple of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī (q.v.), and the initiating guru of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Jaḍa—inanimate, material, foolish.

Jagad-darśana—material outlook.

Jagad-guru—"the preceptor of the universe";one whose instructions may be beneficially followed by everyone within the universe.

Jagāi and Mādhāi—the criminal brothers who were reformed by the intervention of Lord

Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda (narrated in *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*).

Jagannātha—a name of Kṛṣṇa meaning "Lord of the universe." It particularly refers to a specific deity form of Kṛṣṇa, whose large temple and elaborate worship therein at Purī, Orissa, is especially famous.

(Śrīla) Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī—(nineteenth century) a great Gauḍīya *ācārya* who was instrumental in locating the apperance site of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Jagannātha Miśra—the father of Lord Caitanya.

Jagannātha-vallabha Udyāna—a garden in Purī.

Jagat—"universe." Unless otherwise specified, it generally refers to the material world.

Janmāṣṭamī—the *āvirbhāva-tithi* of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Japa—soft recitation of the Lord's holy names, usually on beads. *See also* **Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra.**

Japa-mālā—string of beads used for counting *japa.*

Jāta-gosāñis—*See* Caste Goswamis.

Jaya—victory. Often used as an expression of praise.

Jaya-dhvani—recitation of the names of worshipable persons, places, etc., each utterance being followed by group exclamation of *Jaya!* (*Dhvani*—sound)

Jīva—the living entity, who is an eternal individual soul, an atomic particle of the Supreme Lord's energy.

(Śrīla) Jīva Gosvāmī—(1511–1608) one of the Six Gosvāmīs. In his writings he detailed the principles of Gauḍīya philosophy.

Jīvan-mukta—a person liberated in this very lifetime. *See also* **Mukti.**

Jñāna—(1) knowledge; (2) abstruse spiritual knowledge, based on Vedic texts, purported to lead to liberation.

Jñāna-kāṇḍa—(1) the portion of Vedic literature that presents abstruse spiritual knowledge for achieving liberation from material existence; (2) the path of dedication to actions in pursuance of that knowledge and goal.

Jñānī—(1) *(conventional usage)* a knowledgeable person; (2) *(primary usage of Gauḍīya*

Vaiṣṇavas) a seeker of the absolute truth through philosophical speculation, usually with an impersonalist bent; adherent of the *jñāna-kāṇḍa;* (3) *(ontological usage)* devotee in full knowledge of Kṛṣṇa as the Absolute Truth.

Jyotiṣa—the Vedic science of astronomy and astrology.

Jyotiṣī—a practitioner of *jyotiṣa.*

Kaccha—the part of a dhoti or sari that is folded and tucked in.

Kali—vice personified.

Kālī—a fierce form of Durgā (q.v.).

Kali-yuga—the present age characterized by hypocrisy, quarrel, and *adharma,* which began five thousand years ago and is the last in the universal cycle of four ages.

Kāma—(1) desire, either mundane or spiritual; (2) lust. *See also* **Dharma-artha-kāma-mokṣa.**

Kaniṣṭha-adhikārī—a neophyte devotee, on the lowest level of devotional service, with little understanding of *tattva* and having a materialistic outlook.

Karatālas—small hand cymbals played in accompaniment to *kīrtana.*

Karma—(1) action; (2) fruitive activity performed in accordance to *karma-kāṇḍa* injunctions; (3) the principle governing material action and reaction; (4) reactions to previously performed activities; destiny.

Karma-kāṇḍa—(1) the path of fruitive activities, particularly sacrificial rites, for achieving resultant sense gratification; (2) the portion of Vedic literature that recommends performance of such activities.

Karma-kāṇḍīya—pertaining to *karma-kāṇḍa.*

Karmī, Karma-kāṇḍī—a follower of *karma-kāṇḍa,* engaged in materialistic work and having little or no spiritual inclination.

Kārṣṇa—(1) a devotee of Kṛṣṇa; (2) a member of Kṛṣṇa's family.

Kārtika—the sacred month (mid-October to mid-November) of Dāmodara, the final and most important month of Cātur-māsya, during which Vaiṣṇavas traditionally reside in a holy place, especially Mathurā-Vṛndāvana, and perform extra austerities and spiritual practices.

Kārtika-vrata—special vows followed during Kārtika. Also known as Ūrja-*vrata* or

Dāmodara-*vrata.*

Kathā—talk, discourse, story, topic, words, message. *See also* **Hari-kathā; Kṛṣṇa-kathā.**

Kātyāyanī—a name of Durgā (q.v.).

Kaupīna—loincloth. In Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, a sanctified *kaupīna* is a symbol of renunciation awarded to men entering *bābājī* life.

Kāyastha—a subcaste.*

Khol—*See* Mrdaṅga.

Kīrtana—(1) chanting of the names and glories of the Supreme Lord; (2) a sung litany; (3) a specific song of glorification. *See also* **Bhajana; Saṅkīrtana.**

Kīrtanīyā—a performer of sung *kīrtana,* especially a lead singer.

Krishnanagar—a town near Māyāpur.

Kṛpā—mercy.

Kṛṣṇa—original, all-attractive form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness—acting in knowledge of one's relationship with Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Absolute Truth. *See also* **Devotional service.**

Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī—a name of many *bābājīs.* In *Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava* it mostly refers to the personal servant (1887–1915) of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

(Śrīla) Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī—(?–1582) the author of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (for which he is primarily known) and also *Śrī Govinda-līlāmṛta,* another seminal Gauḍīya work.

Kṛṣṇa-kathā—a synonym of Hari-*kathā* (q.v.).

Kṣatriya—(1) a warrior and ruler; (2) the second occupational division of the Vedic social system. *See also* **Varṇa; Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Kuliyā—(1) the medieval name of the site of much of the present town of Navadvīpa; (2) the name usually used by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and his discipular followers to refer to the modern town of Navadvīpa, to avoid connoting it as the original Navadvīpa mentioned in old records as the birthplace of Lord Caitanya. (Most of those who reject Māyāpur as the birthplace of Lord Caitanya regard the location of Kuliyā as currently unascertainable.)

Kumbha-melā—a gargantuan month-long religious conclave held every twelve years at

Prayāga. Six years after each Kumbha-melā an Ardha (half) Kumbha-melā is held, which also attracts large crowds.

Kuṇḍa—a pond.

Kurukṣetra—the ancient place of pilgrimage that was also the site of the great Battle of Kurukṣetra, fought five thousand years ago (elaborately described in *Mahābhārata*).

Kuṭī, kuṭīra—hut, cottage.

Lābha-pūjā-pratiṣṭhā—"gain, worship, and fame," desire for which is mentioned by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu as three major obstacles on the path of Kṛṣṇa conscious progress (Cc 2.19.159).

Lakṣmaṇa—one of Lord Rāmacandra's three younger brothers. *See* Rāma.

Lakṣmī—the goddess of fortune and eternal consort of Lord Nārāyaṇa (Viṣṇu).

Līlā—(1) transcendental activities of Bhagavān or His liberated devotees. Such activities are conducted under the internal, pleasure-giving potency of Bhagavān, in contradistinction to the activities of conditioned souls, which are conducted under the external, pain-giving potency of Bhagavān; (2) a specific episode within the activities of the Supreme Lord or His liberated devotees.

Līlā-smaraṇa—contemplation of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, especially his Vraja-*līlā*. This arises naturally in the heart of a pure devotee, but is also attempted by certain Gauḍīya sects as a *sādhana* based on visualizing Kṛṣṇa's pastimes and one's role therein.

Lord Caitanya—*See* Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Madana-mohana—a name of Kṛṣṇa meaning "He who bewilders Cupid."

Mādhava—a name of Kṛṣṇa meaning "the husband of the goddess of fortune."

(Śrīla) Mādhavendra Purī—a great Gauḍīya *ācārya* who appeared prior to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He was the first Vaiṣṇava in the present era to manifest the sentiment of separation from Kṛṣṇa, which is the essence of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava ontology. He was also the guru of many prominent devotees, including Śrīla Īśvara Purī and Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu.

Madhura—*(adj.)* sweet.

Madhura-rasa, Mādhurya-rasa—"mellow of sweetness";topmost *rasa* of sweet exchanges between Kṛṣṇa and His transcendental consorts or girlfriends (*gopīs*). *See also* **Rasa.**

Madhva, Madhvācārya—the great Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* of the twelfth (or thirteenth) century who

preached *dvaita-vāda,* the philosophy of difference between the Supreme Lord and all else that exists, He being absolutely independent and everything else fully dependent on Him.

Mādhva—pertaining to Madhva or to Vaiṣṇavism coming in his line.

Madhyama-adhikārī—an intermediate devotee, on the middle level of devotional service, who is a serious yet still not perfected *sādhaka.*

Mahā *(prefix)*—great.

Mahābhārata—the famous epic and seminal literature at the basis of Vedic culture; includes the *Bhagavad-gītā.*

Mahājana—"great person";*(Vaiṣṇava usage)* a great devotee. It often refers to one of the twelve personages mentioned in SB 6.3.20.

Mahā-mantra—*See* Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra.

Mahānta—*(conventional usages)* (1) proprietor of a temple; (2) institutional head of a *maṭha; (ontological usage)* (3) the guru manifested as a great Vaiṣṇava, as distinguished from *caitya*-guru, the Lord in the heart, the other aspect of guru-*tattva* (see SB 11.29.6).

Mahāprabhu—*See* Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Mahā-puruṣa—*See* Mahājana.

Mahārāja—"great king";(1) a title and term of address for a king; (2) a term of address for a sannyasi or saint; (3) used in conjunction with *guru* to accentuate the absolute majestry of the spiritual master; (4) a title and term of address for a *brāhmaṇa* cook.

Mahāśaya—venerable person (generally used as a title or mode of address).

Mahātmā—"great soul" (generally refers to a particularly venerable sadhu, or used as a title or mode of address for a venerable sadhu).

Mahotsava—festival.

Mālā—(1) garland, string of beads, necklace, rosary; (2) 108 recitations of the *mahā-mantra,* counted on a string of 108 beads.

Mālpuyā—a succulent sweet preparation, standard in Gauḍīya festivals, consisting of sweetened rice-flour puris soaked in thick sugar syrup. (ISKCON-style *mālpuyās* are usually soaked in thick sweet yogurt, and are referred to according to their Hindi name, *malpura.*)

Maṇḍala—(1) area; (2) surrounding district or territory.

Mandira—(1) *(primary usage)* temple; (2) any building or residence.

Maṅgala-ārati—the first *ārati* of the day, performed before dawn.

Maṅgalācaraṇa—a prayer to invoke auspiciousness at the beginning of an undertaking, by praising the Supreme Lord and His intimate devotees and seeking their blessings. Particularly (a) a recital before a formal religious talk, or (b) a poetic invocation preceding a written work.

Mañjarī(s)—the class, or a member thereof, of pre-pubescent female assistants to the principal *gopīs* in their service to Śrī Rādha-Kṛṣṇa.

Mano-'bhīṣṭa—the yearning (*abhīṣṭa*) of the heart (*manas*).

Mantra—a Vedic utterance that delivers the mind from illusion.

Mārga—path, way, method.

Mārjana—cleaning, purification.

Marwaris—a class of people originating in Marwar, Rajasthan, and now spread throughout India. Many are merchants, and their establishments dominate bazars in numerous Indian towns. Traditionally pious and inclined to give charity for religious causes, Marwaris were among the principal donors to Gauḍīya Maṭha activities, especially in Calcutta, where they comprised a significant community.

Maṭha—(1) a temple with an attached ashram for *brahmacārīs* and sannyasis; (2) monastery; (3) (*cap*) Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, or Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, or a branch thereof. *See also* **Ākhḍā.**

Maṭha-rakṣaka—"protector of the *maṭha,*" the devotee in charge of a particular Gauḍīya Maṭha. Usually rendered in English as "secretary" of a particular Gauḍīya Maṭha.

Maṭha-vāsī—a resident of a *maṭha.*

Mathurā—the sacred place where Lord Kṛṣṇa took birth and later returned to after performing childhood pastimes in Vṛṇdāvana. Today its extrinsic manifestation is a large town of the same name in Uttar Pradesh.

Mauna—silence, especially when adopted as a religious observance.

Māyā—"illusion";(1) *(cap)* the personality of the Supreme Lord's material deluding potency; (2) *(lc)* illusion; forgetfulness of one's eternal relationship as servant of Kṛṣṇa. *See also* **Durgā**.

Māyāpur—the place within Navadvīpa-*dhāma* where Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared. According to modern political considerations it is presently in Nadia District, West Bengal.

Māyāvāda—(1) the philosphical thesis of absolute identity between *jīva* and Brahman, Brahman being considered formless and impersonal or void; (2) monism; (3) *(Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava usage)* in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and subsequent texts, it denotes the philosophy propagated by Ādi-Śaṅkarācārya (which among non-Gauḍiyās is generally known as *kevalādvaita-vāda* or *advaita-vāda*); (4) *(non-Gauḍīya usage)* a particular interpretation of *kevalādvaita-vāda. See also* **Ādi-Śaṅkarācārya.**

Māyāvādī—an adherent of Māyāvāda.

Mellow—Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's English rendition of the Sanskrit word *rasa.*

Mleccha—(1) barbarian; (2) a person outside Vedic culture, who does not follow Vedic principles.

Modes of material nature—*See* **Guṇa.**

Mokṣa—liberation from material existence, the cycle of birth and death. *See also* **Dharma-artha-kāma-mokṣa**.

Mṛdaṅga—a two-headed ellipsoidal drum used to accompany *kīrtana.*

Mukti—liberation, especially from the bondage of material existence (thus often used as a synonym for *mokṣa*).

Mukunda—a name of Kṛṣṇa meaning "bestower of liberation."

Mūla—(1) root, basis, foundation, cause, origin; (2) an original text (as distinguished from its translation or commentary).

Muni—a sage or ascetic.

Murāri Gupta—a contemporaneous associate of Lord Caitanya.

Nadia—the district of Bengal in which Navadvīpa is situated.

Nāgara—enjoyer, lady's man.

Nagara-saṅkīrtana—public congregational chanting of the Supreme Lord's holy names, usually on the streets of a city, town, or village. *See also* **Saṅkīrtana**.

Naiṣṭhika-brahmacārī—a lifelong celibate who never wastes his vital bodily fluids but sublimates sexual energy for transcendental purposes.

Nāma—"name";*(Gauḍīya usage)* especially indicates the holy names of Kṛṣṇa.

Nāmābhāsa—(1) *(higher level)* a stage of chanting the holy names in which offenses are ceasing, and the platform of pure chanting is being approached; the chanter of the holy name has initial faith but also some desire for material pleasure or liberation, and is not knowledgable about the respective roles of the *jīva,* Bhagavān, and *māyā,* nor of *bhakti-tattva;* (2) *(lower level)* (as described in SB 6.2.14) chanting of the holy name by a person who has no faith in Kṛṣṇa, either as a coincidence (to indicate something else), in jest, derisively, or neglectfully. For further discussion, see Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *Harināma-cintāmaṇi,* chap. 3.

Nāmācārya—"*ācārya* of the chanting of the holy names";an epithet for Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

Nāma-haṭṭa—"marketplace *(figurative)* of the holy name," conceived by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura as the initial preaching organization of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, it has become a blueprint for ongoing grassroots propagation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Nāmāparādha—(1) offense against the holy name; (2) offensive chanting of the holy name. *See also* **Harināma.**

Nāmī—the personage of the holy name.

Nandana—son.

Nārada-pañcarātra—the scripture revealed by Nārada Muni that, among other topics, delineates the recommended process of deity worship for Kali-yuga. *See also* **Pañcarātra.**

Nārāyaṇa—*See* Viṣnu.

(Śrīla) Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura—(c. 1550–1611) a great *ācārya* whose poems and songs encapsulate the essence of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma.

Nāṭya-mandira—"temple for drama and dancing." Common in Bengali temples in front of the main shrine, it is a roofed pavilion open on four sides, within which people have *darśana* of the deities, perform *kīrtana,* and dance in glorification of the Lord. In colloquial Bengali, the term is rendered *nāṭa-mandira.*

Navadvīpa—(1) Navadvīpa-*maṇḍala* or Navadvīpa-*dhāma;* (2) the present town of Navadvīpa, West Bengal. *See also* **Kuliyā.**

Navadvīpa-dhāma, Navadvīpa-maṇḍala—the sacred area conceived of as comprising nine (*nava*) islands (*dvīpa*), within one of which Māyāpur is situated, and within another the present town of Navadvīpa.

Navadvīpa-dhāma-pracāriṇī Sabhā—an organization founded in 1893 by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and his associates. Its objectives are described in vol. 1, p. 363.

Nimāi (Paṇḍita)—a pre-*sannyāsa* name of Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Nine main processes of bhakti—*śravaṇa* (hearing), *kīrtana* (chanting), *smaraṇa* (remembrance), *pāda-sevana* (serving the lotus feet), *arcana* (deity worship), *vandana* (praising, praying), *dāsya* (self-identification as a servant), *sakhya* (self-identification as a friend), *ātma-nivedana* (self-surrender). (From *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.5.23)

Nirjala-vrata—the vow to undertake total fasting, even from water.

Nirjana-bhajana—solitary *bhajana.*

Nirviśeṣa—"without attributes." (*Nir*—without; *viśeṣa*—attributes)

Nirviśeṣa-vāda—the doctrine of the unspecifiedness of the Absolute Truth. Often used as a synonym for Māyāvāda, which technically is but one genre of *nirviśeṣa-vāda.*

Niṣkiñcana—possessionless. A synonym of *akiñcana.*

Nitāi—diminutive of *Nityānanda. See also* **Nityānanda.**

Nitya—eternal.

(Lord) Nityānanda (Prabhu)—the avatar of Lord Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa's expansion as His own brother, who appeared as the foremost associate of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Nitya-siddha—an eternally perfect person, one who has never forgotten Kṛṣṇa.

Non-malefic mercy—*(Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's translation of* amandodayā dayā, *culled from* Śrī Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭaka *8.10 and quoted as Cc 2.10.119)* welfare acts without harmful effects. For Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's explanation of this term, see his commentary on Cc 2.10.119.

North India—especially refers to the belt where principally Hindi and related languages are spoken, but more broadly includes the entire country (except the northeast region) north of the modern states Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu.

Nṛsiṁha(-deva)—the half-man, half-lion avatar of Lord Viṣṇu.

Orissa—an ancient region and current state of eastern India. In 1912, much of that Oriya-speaking area was incorporated within the Province of Bihar and Orissa, in 1936 was separately formed as the Province of Orissa, and in 1950 was expanded to include several former princely states and reconstituted as the present state.

Oriya—(1) of or pertaining to Orissa; (2) the language or people of Orissa.

Padāvalī—"poetry," particularly Gauḍīya poetry describing the forms, qualities, and especially the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and Lord Caitanya.

Padāvalī-kīrtana—traditional Bengali verse-format *līlā-kīrtana.*

Pallī—neighborhood.

Pālya-dāsī—one of a class of *gopīs* whose members perform most intimate service to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

Pan—(1) betel leaf; (2) a mildly intoxicating masticatory of betel nut, lime, and often spices, all wrapped in a betel leaf.

Pañcarātra—a class of scriptures, venerated particularly by Vaiṣṇavas, describing deity worship, ritual, and procedures. *See also* **Nārada-pañcarātra.**

Pāñcarātrika, pāñcarātrikī—of, according to, or pursuant to *Pañcarātra.*

Pañca-tattva—"five principles";Lord Kṛṣṇa as *bhakta-rūpa,* the form of a devotee, Lord Caitanya; *sva-rūpaka,* the expansion of a devotee, Lord Nityānanda; *bhakta-avatāra,* the descent of a devotee, Advaita Ācārya; *bhakta-śakti,* the energies of Kṛṣṇa, headed and represented by Gadādhara Paṇḍita; and *bhakta-ākhya,* those known as devotees, headed and represented by Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura. (See Cc 1.1.14)

Pāṇḍā—(1) a *brāhmaṇa* residing in a place of pilgrimage and performing diverse functions, such as temple priest or cook, bequeathed via hereditary right. Many *pāṇḍās* function as guides who direct pilgrims to the various sites in a holy place and help them perform rituals thereat.

Paṇḍita—(1) a scholar, particularly of Vedic knowledge; (2) an often undeserved epithet for a member of the *brāhmaṇa* caste, descendants of whom are expected to be learned in Vedic knowledge; (3) a title, affixed to the beginning or end of a name, that generally signifies the bearer to be an accomplished scholar, but may merely indicate his belonging to the *brāhmaṇa* caste.

Pāñjābī—*(Bengali)* a long loosely-fitting shirt.

Para-duḥkha-duḥkhī—a person unhappy at others' distress.

Parama-guru—the guru of one's guru.

Paramahaṁsa—a self-realized saint, completely beyond the influence of material nature. In Vaiṣṇava usage, this word applies only to a topmost Vaiṣṇava, for only a superlative devotee can be truly self-realized and beyond the influence of material nature.

Paramārtha—highest goal, whole truth, spiritual knowledge.

Paramārthī—(1) one dedicated to *paramārtha;* (2) the name of the Gauḍīya Mission's Oriya periodical.

Pāramārthika—of or relating to *paramārtha.*

Paramātmā—a name of Kṛṣṇa meaning "the Supreme Soul";also known as *antaryāmī* (indweller). It usually indicates the localized Viṣṇu expansion of Kṛṣṇa pervading material nature and residing in the heart of each embodied living entity and every atom.

Paramparā—succession. *See also* Guru-*paramparā*.

Paraśurāma—the Viṣṇu-avatar who killed innumerable demonic *kṣatriyas* with his ax.

Para-upakāra—activities meant for the ultimate benefit of others.

Parikramā—circumambulation, particularly of temples and holy places.

Pariṣad—assembly, meeting, association, council.

Pastime(s)—*līlā* (q.v.).

Patañjali—the ancient author of the system of meditative yoga that aims at impersonal liberation.

Phala-śruti—"promise of success";benedictions appended to the end of a scriptural passage or prayer that are bestowed upon whoever attentively and faithfully recites, hears, or reads the content.

Phalgu—small, feeble, weak, unsubstantial, insignificant, worthless, unprofitable, useless.

Prabhu—*(lowercase)* (1) master; *(capital)* (1) the Supreme Lord; (2) a respectful appellation for devotees.

Prabhupāda—(1) "whose position is representative of Prabhu (the Supreme Lord)";(2) "at the lotus feet of Prabhu";(3) "at whose lotus feet are many masters (i.e., Vaiṣṇavas)";an honorific title used to designate or address an *ācārya. See also* **Śrīla Prabhupāda.**

Pracāra—preaching, propagation.

Pracāraka—preacher, propagator.

Pradarśanī—an exhibition.

Prākṛta—material, mundane.

Prākṛta-sahajiyā—an aberrant performer of devotional activities who neglects prescribed regulations and whose philosophical understanding is deviant.

Praṇāma-mantra—a formal prayer expressing respect.

Prapanna—one who has submitted himself or surrendered.

Prapannāśrama—(1) the generic name given by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura to Vaiṣṇava centers he established; (2) the name of some Gauḍīya Maṭha branches.

Prārthanā—a collection of devotional songs by Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura.

Prasāda—"mercy." Conventionally refers to food or other items received as mercy from the Supreme Lord after being offered in *arcana,* or similar items received from high-level devotees.

Prayāga—the Purāṇic and still commonly used name for Allahabad.

Prayojana—necessity, aim, objective; *(Gauḍīya usage)* the ultimate goal of life, namely to develop love of Godhead. *See also* **Abhidheya; Sambandha.**

Prema—transcendental love.

Prema-bhakti-candrikā—a collection of devotional songs by Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura.

Prema-vivarta—"transformations of love";the name of a book ascribed to Śrī Jagadānanda Paṇḍita, an intimate associate of Lord Caitanya.

Premī—a devotee who has *prema. See also* **Rasika.**

Preta—a type of ghost that remains interminably hungry yet has no means for eating.

Pūjā—(1) (a) formal worship; (b) such worship conducted as part of the *arcana* system; (2) a festival connected with a particular *pūjā*—Durgā-*pūjā,* Govardhana-*pūjā,* etc. *See also* **Arcana.**

Pūjala rāga-patha—"They worshiped on the spontaneous path," from a poem by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī that captures the tenor of his mission. (See vol 1, p. 93)

Pūjārī—"one who performs *pūjā*";a *brāhmaṇa* who worships the Lord's deity form. *See also* **Arcana.**

Puṇya—piety, pious deeds.

Puṇya-karma—scripturally ordained pious activities.

Purāṇa—a historical supplement to the Vedas. There are eighteen principal *Purāṇas.*

Pure devotee—*See* Śuddha-bhakta.

Pure devotional service—*See* Śuddha-bhakti.

Purī—(1) the holy place in Orissa that is the principal abode of Lord Jagannātha; (2) a *sannyāsa* title.

Pūrṇimā—full-moon day.

Puruṣottama—a name of Kṛṣṇa meaning "the supreme male."

Puruṣottama-dhāma or **-kṣetra**—a name of Purī and the surrounding area.

Puruṣottama Maṭha—a Gauḍīya Maṭha branch established by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura at Purī.

Puruṣottama-vrata—special vows followed during the sacred intercalary month of Puruṣottama.

Puṣpa-samādhi—a memorial for a departed *paramahaṁsa* Vaiṣṇava established by entombing some flowers from his original *samādhi,* and considered a replica of and as venerable as the original. *See also* **Samādhi.**

(Śrī, Śrīmatī) Rādhā, Rādhārāṇī, Rādhikā—Lord Kṛṣṇa's internal potency and most intimate consort.

Rādhā-kuṇḍa—the bathing place of and nondifferent from Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, ascertained by Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas to be the most sacred location in all existence, the quintessence of all holy places.

Rādhāṣṭamī—the appearance day of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

Rāga—(1) *(Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava usage)* spontaneous intense loving attachment to Kṛṣṇa not governed by scriptural regulations, characteristic of the original inhabitants of Vṛndāvana; (2) a musical mode.

Rāga-mārga, Rāgānuga-bhakti, Rāga-patha—the path of following *rāgātmika-bhaktas* to cultivate love of Kṛṣṇa in intimate exchange.

Rāgātmika—composed of or characterized by *rāga*.

(Śrīla) Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī—(1506–1580) one of the Six Gosvāmīs, and famous for reciting *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

(Śrīla) Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī—(1495–1571) one of the Six Gosvāmīs, and known as the *prayojana-ācārya.*

Rākṣasa—(1) a powerful race of cannibals, usually possessed of mystic powers; (2) anyone of highly sinful mentality.

Rāma—"pleasant", "charming";a prominent name of Viṣṇu. It particularly refers to the Viṣṇu-avatar Rāmacandra, who appeared in Tretā-yuga as the ideal king.

Rāmacandra—*See* Rāma.

(Śrīla) Rāmānanda Rāya—one of the most intimate associates of Lord Caitanya during His pastimes in Purī.

(Śrī, Śrīpāda) Rāmānuja, Rāmānujācārya—the powerful eleventh-century *ācārya* of the Śrī *sampradāya* who preached the philosophy of *viśiṣṭādvaita* (qualified oneness).

Rāmāyaṇa—the epic narration of Lord Rāmacandra's pastimes.

Rasa—taste, or mellow, of a relationship, particularly in regard to Kṛṣṇa. As explained by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu,* the five main *rasas* are *śānta* (neutrality), *dāsya* (servitude), *sakhya* (friendship), *vātsalya* (parental love), and *mādhurya* (amatory love).

Rasābhāsa—contradictory and distasteful overlapping of one *rasa* with another.

Rasagullā—a particular type of sweetball made from milk curd.

Rāsa(-līlā)—the circular dance of Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs,* the most celebrated of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes (described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* Tenth Canto, chapters twenty-nine through thirty-three).

Rasa-śāstra—a treatise concerning *rasa.*

Rāsa-sthalī—a site of *rāsa-līlā.* There are several within Vraja-*maṇḍala,* of which the most prominent (being the venue of the *mahā-rāsa* performed during Kārtika) is the site of the Rādhā-Govinda temple within the present town of Vrindaban.

Rasika—a person absorbed in the mellows of *rasa,* especially *gopī-rasa.* Refers to both devotees and the Supreme Lord.

Ratha-yātrā—the annual festival in Purī and other places for pulling the deities of Lord Jagannātha, Lord Balarāma, and Subhadrā-devī in procession on huge decorated canopied chariots.

Rāvaṇa—the *rākṣasa* king who was the chief foe of Lord Rāmacandra and ultimately was killed by Him.

Ṛṣi—(1) a sage; (2) *(original meaning)* a sage with transcendental ability to perceive and transmit nonextant Vedic mantras.

(Śrīla) Rūpa Gosvāmī—(1489–1564) the foremost of the Six Gosvāmīs, and known as the *rasācārya.*

Rūpānuga—a discipular follower of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

Rūpa-Raghunātha—Rūpa Gosvāmī and Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī. As the two among the Six Gosvāmīs whose writings particularly reveal the topmost *rasa* that is the essence of and worshipable goal in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma, their names are often clubbed together to indicate that essence and goal.

Sabhā—assembly, council.

Saccidānanda—*(lowercase)* "possessed of eternity (*sat*), knowledge (*cit*), and bliss (*ānanda*)";attributes of the Supreme Lord and liberated devotees; *(capital)* (1) a name of Lord Viṣṇu, (2) a name of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

Śacīdevī, Śacīmātā—the mother of Lord Caitanya.

Śacīnandana—a name of Lord Caitanya meaning "the son of Śacī."

Sadācāra—adherence to scriptural rules governing proper behavior. *See also* **Ācāra.**

Sādhaka—a practitioner of *sādhana.*

Sādhana—(1) means for attaining a spiritual or religious goal; (2) regulated spiritual practice.

Sādhana-bhakti—(1) devotional service executed by practicing a regulative process meant to invoke one's dormant Kṛṣṇa consciousness; (2) *vaidhī bhakti* (q.v.).

Sadhu—(Sanskrit: *sādhu)* (1) a saintly person, especially a renunciant; (2) a devotee of Kṛṣṇa, especially a renunciant or pure devotee; (3) a Hindu holy man.

Sādhu-śāstra-guru—(from *Prema-bhakti-candrikā*) the threefold authoritative source of knowledge. The word *sādhu* used herein refers principally to recognized previous *ācāryas* and to present advanced devotees.

Sādhya—the goal, or desired attainment, of a particular *sādhana.*

Sāgara—ocean.

Sahajiyā—*See* Prākṛta-sahajiyā.

Sāhitya—literature.

Śaiva—"in relation to Lord Śiva";*(particularly)* a worshiper of Lord Śiva.

Sajjana-toṣaṇī—the Vaiṣṇava magazine started by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and continued by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. (*Sajjana*—God's devotee; *toṣaṇī*—who gives satisfaction to)

Sakhī—"female friend";*(Gauḍīya usage)* an intimate handmaid of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

Sakhya—friendship. *See also* **Rasa.**

Śākta—one who worships material energy, in her forms such as Kālī or Durgā, as the supreme reality.

Śakti—(1) energy, potency; (2) the personality of an energy or potency, e.g., Rādhā, Durgā.

Śaktyāveśa-avatāra—a person endowed by the Supreme Lord with special potency to carry out a particular mission.

Śālagrāma-śilā—Lord Viṣṇu in the form of particular stones.

Samādhi—(1) the perfected state of spiritual trance; (2) tomb of a departed saint, especially a *paramahaṁsa* Vaiṣṇava.

Samāj—(Sanskrit: *samāja)* society, association.

Samājī—a member of a *samāj.*

Sambandha—relationship. In Gauḍīya theology, *sambandha-jñāna* (knowledge of one's existential position in relationship to the Supreme and everything else that be) is considered the first of three divisions of Vedic knowledge. The other two are *abhidheya* (q.v.) and *prayojana* (q.v.).

Sambandha-jñāna—knowledge of the mutual relationship between the Supreme Lord and His energies.

Sammilanī—convention, meeting.

Sampradāya—a sect of spiritual practitioners maintained by the principle of preceptorial succession and distinguished by a unique philosophical position.

Saṁsāra—(1) material existence; (2) the cycle of birth and death; (3) family life.

Saṁskāra—a purificatory rite.

Saṁskāra-dīpikā—the booklet of ceremonies and rituals for Gauḍīya renunciants compiled by Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī as a supplement to his *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā.*

(Śrīla) Sanātana Gosvāmī—(1488–1558) one of the Six Gosvāmīs. He was entrusted by Lord

Caitanya to delineate the principles of *vaidhī bhakti,* the relationship between *vaidhī bhakti* and *rāgānuga-bhakti,* and the subtle truths for ascertaining the differences between manifest and unmanifest Gokula.

Sanātana-śikṣā—Lord Caitanya's systematic instruction to Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī (detailed in Cc 2.20–24).

Saṅga—association (with persons, objects, or conceptions).

Saṅgha—a formal association, establishment, or institution.

Śaṅkara, Śaṅkarācārya—(686–718) an avatar of Lord Śiva who established Māyāvāda in the modern age. *See also* **Ādi-Śaṅkarācārya.**

Saṅkīrtana—congregational chanting of the Supreme Lord's holy names. *See also* **Kīrtana; Nagara-saṅkīrtana.**

Sannyāsa—celibate renounced life, the fourth *āśrama* of the Vedic social system. *See also* **Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Śānta-rasa—the mellow of neutral admiration. *See also* **Rasa.**

Sāragrāhī—"one who appreciates merit or worth";one who enters into the spirit of something; one who accepts the essence of reality. (*Sāra*—essence; *grāhī*—one who accepts)

Śaraṇāgati—(1) "approach for protection," the path of surrender to the Lord; (2) a collection of songs by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura outlining that path.

Sārasvata—in relation to Sarasvatī.

Sarasvatī—(1) (a) the goddess of learning; (b) the same goddess in the form of a river (several rivers bear this name, including one that flows through Māyāpur, where she is popularly known as Jalāṅgī; (2) a title for a scholar, indicating that he has received the grace of Goddess Sarasvatī.

Sarovara—lake.

Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya—a contemporaneous associate of Lord Caitanya.

Śāstra—(1) revealed scripture; (2) the four Vedas and literature in pursuance of the Vedic version.

Śāstrī—(1) a scholar, particularly of Vedic knowledge; *paṇḍita* (q.v.) (2) a title, generally affixed to the end of a name, for an accomplished scholar; (3) a *brāhmaṇa* surname.

Śāstric *(anglicization)*—scriptural.

Śāstrīya—scriptural.

Sat—correct, proper, good, genuine, eternal, existing, wise, true.

Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā—the book of ceremonies and rituals for Gauḍīya householders compiled by Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī.

Ṣaṭ-sandarbha—"six treatises";a series of works by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī that systematically present and establish Gauḍīya philosophy.

Sattva—(1) goodness, purity; (2) existence, essence, existential condition; (3) *(Vaiṣṇava usage)* the pristine condition of the pure soul, overflowing with loving feelings for Kṛṣṇa.

Sāttvika—(1) characterized by the mode of goodness *(sattva)*; (2) related to existence. *See also* **Modes of material nature.**

Sātvata—a synonym of *Vaiṣṇava* (q.v.).

Satya—truth.

Satya-yuga—the first in the universal cycle of four ages, characterized by proper and complete maintenance of the principles of dharma.

Sevā—service. In Vaiṣṇava usage it refers particularly to service offered voluntarily and selflessly to Bhagavān and His devotees. *See also* **Devotional service.**

Sevonmukha—"inclined to service." It usually indicates the inclination of a devotee to serve the Supreme Lord and His pure representatives. *See also* **Devotional service.**

Siddha—(1) perfect; (2) a consummate saint. It is often used as a title for a perfected saint or one thus considered. *See also* **Nitya-siddha.**

Siddhānta—(1) the ultimate conclusion of any philosophical proposal or system; (2) an established textbook of Vedic astronomy; (3) the branch of astronomy giving mathematical basis to stellar observations.

Siddha-praṇālī—(1) a process whereby one envisions himself in his (real or supposed) eternal spiritual identity; (2) *sādhana* (a process leading to perfection); (3) the path practiced and shown by perfect devotees; (4) the preceptorial line of perfect devotees.* (*Praṇālī*—method, procedure, channel)

Siddha-svarūpa—the eternal form of a perfect devotee in Kṛṣṇa-*līlā*.

Siddhi—(1) perfection; (2) the perfectional stage; (3) mystical achievement.

Śikhā—symbolic tuft of hair on the pate, traditionally obligatory for most male members of Vedic society.

Śikṣā—(1) training, education, instruction; (2) the section of Sanskrit studies dealing with pronunciation.

Śikṣā-guru—an instructing guru.

Śikṣāṣṭaka—the eight verses composed by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu expressing the quintessence of Vaiṣṇava philosophy.

Śilā—stone. *See also* **Govardhana-śilā; Śālagrāma-śilā.**

Śiṣya—(feminine: *śiṣyā*) a disciple.

Sītā—the eternal consort of Lord Rāmacandra.

Śiva—the demigod in charge of the mode of ignorance and destruction of the material manifestation, and also famous as the protector of Vṛndāvana-*dhāma* and as the best of Vaiṣṇavas (*vaiṣṇavānāṁ yathā śambhuḥ—Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 12.13.16).

Six Gosvāmīs (of Vṛndāvana)—Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, and Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, the principal renunciant followers of Lord Caitanya who on His order resided in Vṛndāvana and wrote many important books. After Caitanya Mahāprabhu departed this world, they became the leaders of the Gauḍīya community. *See also the individual names.*

Śloka—a Sanskrit verse, particularly one in the meter *anuṣṭubh,* and usually from a recognized scripture or text.

Smaraṇa—remembrance, contemplation.

Smārta—"follower of *smṛti.*" It generally refers to an adherent of *smārta-vāda,* the belief that by fastidiously following *smṛti* regulations one can enjoy the results of pious activities, gradually qualify to be reborn within the *brāhmaṇa* caste and be elevated to the platform of *jñāna,* and finally achieve *mukti.* This materialistic understanding of Vedic dharma is opposed to Vaiṣṇava dharma.

Smārta-brāhmaṇas—*brāhmaṇa* adherents of *smārta-vāda.*

Smṛti—(a) Vedic texts subsequent to *śruti* and, unlike *śruti,* handed down in writing; (b) one of several compilations of civil and criminal laws and codes of behavior for followers of Vedic culture. *See also* **Śāstra; Śruti.**

South India—a cultural bloc distinct from North India, it basically comprises the modern states Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu.

Spiritual master—guru.

Śraddhā—faith.

Śrāddha—a ceremony for the benefit of departed forefathers.

Śrauta—that which is heard in discipular succession and is according to the Vedas.

Śrī—"opulence" or "possessed of opulence";(1) an epithet for Rādhārāṇī and Lakṣmī; (2) a term, usually prepositive, to denote respect for a person or a sacred book, place, or other object.

Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha—(1) an embellished mode of reference to the Gauḍīya Maṭha institution; (2) the original Gauḍīya Maṭha, in Calcutta.

Śrīla—an honorific prefix to names of exalted devotees.

Śrīla Prabhupāda—*(in this book, refers to)* (1) Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda; (2) His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam—the topmost *Purāṇa,* composed by Śrīla Vyāsadeva to present confidential and definitive understanding of Lord Kṛṣṇa, His devotees, and pure devotional service to Him. Also known as the *Bhāgavata* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa.*

Śrīmatī—(1) feminine form of the honorific address Śrī; (2) an epithet of Rādhārāṇī.

Śrīpāṭa—place of the appearance or *bhajana* of a great Vaiṣṇava.

Śrī sampradāya—succession originating from Lakṣmī, of which the prominent *ācārya* in the current age is Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya.

Śrī Vaiṣṇava—devotee in the Śrī *sampradāya.*

Śrīvāsa (Paṇḍita, Ṭhākura)—a contemporaneous associate of Lord Caitanya.

Śrīvāsa Aṅgana—(1) the site in Māyāpur of Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura's home; (2) the temple established thereat by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Śṛṅgāra—amatory love.

Śruti—"what has been heard";(1) sound; (2) the Veda, sacred knowledge in the form of eternal sounds or words, heard or communicated from the beginning of creation and transmitted orally by *brāhmaṇas* from generation to generation; considered the original and thus most

authoritative section of *śāstra,* having precedence over *smṛti. See also* **Śāstra; Smṛti.**

Sthalī—place.

Sthāna—place, abode, position.

Sudarśana—the disk weapon of Lord Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa.

Śuddha—pure.

Śuddha-bhakta—devotee free from desires other than to please Kṛṣṇa through pure devotional service.

Śuddha-bhakti—devotional service performed solely for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa, uncontaminated by any other motive. (See explanation in vol. 1, p. 283)

Śuddha-nāma—pure chanting of the holy names, i.e., free from offenses, personal motives, and misconceptions. *See also* **Nāmābhāsa; Nāmāparādha.**

Śūdra—(1) laborer or artisan; (2) the fourth occupational division of the Vedic social system. *See also* **Varṇa; Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Śukadeva Gosvāmī—the son of Śrīla Vyāsadeva and the original speaker of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in its present form.

Sukha—happiness.

Supersoul—*See* Paramātmā.

Supreme Personality of Go dhead—Kṛṣṇa (God), the supreme creator, maintainer, and controller of all that be.

Surrender—*(in Vaiṣṇava parlance)* full submission (of oneself as a servant of guru and Bhagavān).

Sūtra—(1) a thread (including the sacred thread worn by higher-caste men); (2) an aphorism, especially one considered to be definitive or an irreducible rule; (3) a work consisting of such aphorisms.

Svāmī—*See* Gosvāmī.

Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja—"the grove that gives the happiness of one's own bliss;" Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's place of *bhajana* and residence in Godrumadvīpa, Navadvīpa-*dhāma.*

Svarga—heaven. Described in Vedic literature, it is inhabited by persons who by *puṇya-*

karma attain the status of demigods, enabling them to enjoy paradisiac delights for several thousand years by earthly calculation. *Svarga* differs from Abrahamic ideations of heaven inasmuch as it is not the abode of the Supreme Lord, nor is residence there eternal.

Svarūpa—"own form";(1) the eternal form of the Supreme Lord; (2) the eternal form intrinsic to a specific *jīva;* (3) intrinsic spiritual nature.

(Śrīla) Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī—the personal secretary and intimate confidant of Lord Caitanya during His pastimes in Purī.

Svarūpa-śakti—internal or intrinsic potency.

Svarupganj—the terrestrial name for a village in the area corresponding to that which by spiritual vision is perceived as Godrumadvīpa, within Navadvīpa-*dhāma;* therein Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja is situated.

Śyāmānandī—(1) a discipular follower of Śyāmānanda Prabhu, a great sixteenth-century Gauḍīya preacher; (2) the sect within the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* comprising such followers. (See vol. 1, p. 44, fn *)

Tāmasic—characterized by the mode of ignorance (*tamas*). *See also* **Modes of material nature.**

Tantra—a genre of texts that describe esoteric practices of some Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain sects, and include theology, rituals, yoga, and construction of temples and images, and encompass the Vaiṣṇava *saṁhitās,* Śaiva *āgama*s, and Śākta tantras (which deal with spells, rituals, and mystic symbols). Among these, only the Vaiṣṇava- or Sātvata-tantras are Vedic.

Tantric—(1) of or relating to tantra; (2) a practitioner of tantrism.

Tantrism—practices based on tantra. It is generally identified with rituals of the "left-hand" Śākta system, including ritual copulation and black magic, but also correctly refers to the more staid practices of various mainstream Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain sects.

Tattva—(1) metaphysical principle; (2) philosophical topic, particularly as described in Vedic scripture and elucidated by *ācāryas.*

Ṭhākura—a title designating a Vaiṣṇava situated on the topmost level of devotional service. *See also* **Paramahaṁsa.**

Ṭīkā—commentary on scripture, especially a commentary on or based on a *bhāṣya* (q.v.).

Tilaka—auspicious clay-markings on the upper part of the body, principally the forehead. The design varies according to, and thus indicates, one's *sampradāya.*

Timiṅgila—(described in Vedic literature) an aquatic that preys on whales.

Tirobhāva—Vaiṣṇava terminology for the apparent demise of a Viṣṇu-avatar or an exalted devotee, in contradistinction to the death of conditioned souls as per the law of karma. Rendered in English as *disappearance,* for rather than ceasing to exist, such eternal personages simply become indiscernable to mortal vision, like the disappearance of the sun upon setting.

Tirobhāva-tithi—the anniversary day of the disappearance of an exalted devotee or Viṣṇu-avatar. *See also* **Āvirbhāva-tithi; Tithi.**

Tīrtha—(1) a holy place, person, or object; (2) a *sannyāsa* title (one of ten awarded to sannyasis of the Śaṅkara *sampradāya,* one of a hundred and eight awarded to Gauḍīya sannyasis, and the only title awarded to Mādhva sannyasis).

Tithi—lunar day. In Vedic culture, important events such as the appearance or disappearance of exalted personages are recorded and celebrated according to the corresponding *tithi.*

Ṭoṭā-gopīnātha—(1) the particular deity of Gopīnātha situated in Purī and previously served by Gadādhara Paṇḍita; (2) the temple of this deity. (*Ṭoṭā* [Oriya]—grove.)

Tretā-yuga—the second in the universal cycle of four ages, characterized by a one-fourth decrease in *dharmika* principles from the preceding age, Satya-yuga (q.v.).

Tridaṇḍa—the symbolic staff composed of three (*tri*) bamboo rods carried by Vaiṣṇava sannyasis of the Gauḍīya and Śrī *sampradāyas.* The Gauḍīya *tridaṇḍa* actually has four sticks. (See Cc 2.3.6, commentary) *See also* **Daṇḍa**.

Tridaṇḍī—a Vaiṣṇava sannyasi who carries a *tridaṇḍa.*

Tṛṇād api sunīcatā—"the state of being lower than grass";considering oneself very low; utter humility. This phrase is derived from *tṛṇād api sunīcena* (q.v.).

Tṛṇād api sunīcena—"by one who considers himself lower than grass";the first words of an oft-quoted verse by Lord Caitanya recommending utter humility. The full verse with translation appears in vol. 2, p. 220.

Tulasī—(1) the sacred plant most dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa, and thus worshiped by the Lord's devotees; (2) (in her original form) a *gopī* of Vṛndāvana. Both neckbeads (*kaṇṭhi-mālā*) and chanting beads (*japa-mālā*) made from *tulasī* wood are necessary paraphernalia for Gauḍīyas. For offering *bhoga* to Lord Viṣṇu, *tulasī* leaves are essential, as He does not accept any offering sans *tulasī* leaves.

Uddīpana—item that stimulates remembrance of and love for Kṛṣṇa—e.g., Śrī Kṛṣṇa's qualities and activities, His mode of decoration, the way His hair is arranged, His smile, bodily

fragrance, flute, bugle, ankle-bells, conch, foot-impressions, and places of pastimes, Tulasī, the Vaiṣṇavas, Ekādaśī, etc. (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 2.1.301–2).

United Provinces—(full name: United Provinces of Agra and Oudh) a major administrative area of northern British India. It corresponded approximately to the present-day states of Uttar Pradesh (also abbreviated as U.P.) and Uttarkhand.

Untouchable—(Sanskrit: *aspṛśya*) (1) an object or person considered defiling if contacted by touch; (2) outcaste, the broad class (beneath all Hindu castes) whose members are shunned because of their low birth and the unclean habits and professions allotted them.

U.P.—*see* **United Provinces**

Upanayana—the ceremony whereby one is initiated into the chanting of Brahma-*gāyatrī* and invested with an *upavīta,* thus being endowed by the guru with "second" birth. Traditionally this induction certified the disciple for training in systematic memorization of one or more Vedas. *See also* **Dīkṣā.**

Upaniṣads—philosophical treatises within the Vedas, one hundred and eight of which are considered principal, and the following ten the most important: *Īśa (Iśopaṇiṣad), Kena, Kaṭha, Praśna, Muṇḍaka, Māṇḍūkya, Taittirīya, Aitareya, Chāndogya, Bṛhad-āraṇyaka.* Some add *Śvetāśvatara* and thus designate eleven principal *Upaniṣads*.

Upavīta—"sacred thread";a loop of cotton strands bestowed upon a male youth in a religious ceremony for (at least ostensibly) inducting him into Vedic study; it was henceforth to be worn at all times, generally over the left shoulder and under the right, and extending diagonally across the torso. Although traditionally also given to *kṣatriyas* and *vaiśyas,* in recent generations it has been the prerogative of *brāhmaṇas,* and thus a status symbol.

Ūrja-vrata—*See* Kārtika-vrata.

Uttama—"above ignorance and darkness";topmost.

Uttama-adhikārī—topmost, fully perfect devotee. *See also* **Paramahaṁsa.**

Vāda—a philosophical theory. In Vedic philosophy it denotes various theories, such as Māyāvāda, *viśiṣṭādvaita-vāda,* etc.

Vādī—*(in conjunction with a qualifying term)* an adherent of a specific *vāda;* e.g., Māyāvādī means an adherent of Māyāvāda.

Vaibhava—might, power, greatness, grandeur, glory, magnificence.

Vaidhī bhakti—the stage of *sādhana* consisting of prescribed regulations meant to gradually

elevate neophyte devotees. *See also* **Sādhana-bhakti.**

Vaikuṇṭha—the spiritual world.

Vairāgī—(1) a mendicant; (2) an epithet for members of the *bābājī* class, many of whom at the time of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī were superficially renounced hypocrites who indulged in illicit sex. *See also* **Bābājī.**

Vairāgya—renunciation, detachment. *See also* **Yukta-vairāgya.**

Vaiṣṇava—(1) a devotee of Viṣṇu (Kṛṣṇa), especially a pure, fully perfect devotee; (2) of or pertaining to a Vaiṣṇava or to Vaiṣṇava dharma.

Vaiṣṇava-aparādha—offense against a Vaiṣṇava. *See also* **Aparādha.**

Vaiṣṇava dharma, Vaiṣṇavism—the cult of worship of Viṣṇu.

Vaiṣṇavī—a female Vaiṣṇava.

Vaiśya—(1) an agriculturist or merchant; (2) the third occupational division of the Vedic social system. *See also* **Varṇa; Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Vallabha—"lover," "husband";(1) a name of Kṛṣṇa; (2) (also known as Vallabhācārya) a contemporary of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the preceptor of a Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* prominent in western India; (3) the name of the aforesaid *sampradāya.*

Vaṁśa—dynasty.

Vana(m)—forest.

Vānaprastha—(1) a celibate retiree from family life; (2) the third *āśrama* of the Vedic social system. *See also* **Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Vāṇī—words, instructions, message.

Vapu—body, form.

Varṇa—any of the four occupational divisions in the Vedic social system: *brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya,* and *śūdra. See also* **Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Varṇāśrama-dharma—the Vedic social system of four occupational divisions and four spiritual orders. *See also* **Āśrama; Dharma; Varṇa.**

Vārṣabhānavī—a name for Rādhārāṇī meaning "the daughter of Mahārāja Vṛṣabhānu."

Vāsa—residence; the state of residing in.

Vāsī—resident.

Vātsalya-rasa—**"**mellow of parental affection." *See also* **Rasa.**

Vedānta—"conclusion of Vedic knowledge";(1) the *Upaniṣads;* (2) the *Vedānta-sūtra* or philosophy thereof.

Vedānta-sūtra—Śrīla Vyāsadeva's aphoristic compendium of the essence of Vedic knowledge.

Vicāra—analysis, consideration, judgment.

Viddha—*(Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's usage)* contaminated.

Vidhi—scripturally ordained regulations.

Vidhi-mārga—the path of *bhakti* governed by adherence to scripturally ordained regulations (and thus distinguished from *rāga-mārga*).

Vidvad-rūḍhi—the meaning (*rūḍhi*) of a word accepted by the learned (*vidvān*); the internal, transcendental meaning of a word. *See also* **Ajña-rūḍhi.**

Vidyā—knowledge.

Vigraha—"form." It often indicates the Supreme Lord in His manifestation as the deity (q.v.).

Vijaya-vigraha—a small deity of a temple who participates in festivals on behalf of the larger deity, who generally remains on the altar. In South India and in ISKCON, this deity is more commonly known by the synonymous term *utsava-vigraha.*

Vilāpa-kusumāñjali—The composition of 104 verses by Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī expressing his desperate separation from Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and craving Her service.

Vilāsa—pastime, sport, appearance, manifestation, charm, shining, beauty.

Vinoda—pleasure.

Vipralambha, **Viraha**—separation (of lovers). Lord Caitanya taught that the most exquisite worship of Kṛṣṇa is in the mood of separation (*viraha-bhāva*); hence this mood is the heart of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma. Devotees in this mortal world also feel *viraha* from devotees departed from it.

Viṣaya—object, concern, sphere, category, etc.

Viṣaya-vigraha—"the form of the object," the object of *prema*, i.e., Kṛṣṇa. *See also* **Āśraya-vigraha.**

Viṣṇu—the Supreme Lord, especially His majestic four-armed forms in Vaikuṇṭha and His expansions for creating and maintaining the material universes.

Viṣṇupriyā—the eternal consort of Lord Caitanya who appeared in His pastimes as His second wife, famous for her strict practice of Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti* after He accepted *sannyāsa*.

Viṣṇusvāmī—the original preceptor of the Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* named after him.

Viśva—universe, universal, earth, world, all, entire, whole.

(Śrīla) Viśvanātha Cakravartī—(seventeenth century) a prominent Gauḍīya *ācārya* best known for writings of his that illuminate *mādhurya-bhāva*.

Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā—"universal royal court of Vaiṣṇavas";the organization founded by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and his associates in 1919 that served as the official organ of the Gauḍīya Maṭha institution.

Vraja—a synonym of Vṛndāvana.

Vrajapattana—"the town of Vraja";an area in Māyāpur so named by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura for its being considered nondifferent from Vṛndāvana, and where he resided for several years prior to accepting *sannyāsa*. That area was later incorporated within the compound of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha.

Vraja-vāsa—residence in Vraja.

Vraja-vāsī—(1) a resident of Vraja; (2) a designation given by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to *vānaprastha* disciples.

Vrajendra-nandana—a name of Kṛṣṇa meaning "son of Nanda Mahārāja, the king of Vraja."

Vrata—vow or observance, usually religious.

Vṛndāvana—(1) the uppermost transcendental abode of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa; (2) the same abode descended to this planet and comprising the present town and surrounding area of Vrindaban (about ninety miles southeast of Delhi), wherein Kṛṣṇa enacted childhood and adolescent pastimes five thousand years ago.

(Śrīla) Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura—the author of *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*.

(Śrīla) Vyāsadeva—the avatar of Lord Kṛṣṇa who compiled the *Vedas, Purāṇas, Vedānta-sūtra,* and *Mahābhārata*.

Vyāsa-pūjā—the ceremony conducted on the *āvirbhāva-tithi* of a guru to honor him as a representative of Vyāsadeva. *See also* **Āvirbhāva-tithi.**

Yajña—a formal Vedic sacrifice.

Yama, Yamarāja—the lord of death.

Yantra—machine.

Yātrā—(1) a religious festival; (2) a religious theatrical performance intended for common people; (3) journey.

Yavana—a barbarian. A *yavana* is similar to a *mleccha* yet considered even more degraded. Among Bengali Hindus, *yavana* is a synonym for Muslim.

Yoga-māyā—(1) *(lowercase)* the spiritual "illusion" whereby out of intense love an infinitesimal *jīva* can assume the role of a child, friend, parent, or lover of the Supreme Lord; (2) *(uppercase)* the personification of this potency.

Yogapīṭha—the birthsite of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in Māyāpur.

Yuga—one of a cycle of four ages in the history of the universe. *See also* **Kali-yuga.**

Yuga-dharma—the process of dharma established by the Supreme Lord in each *yuga,* being the most suitable and effective according to peoples' general capabilities and disposition during that period.

Yukta-vairāgya—renunciation by engaging worldly objects in service to the Supreme Lord without having personal attachment for them. *See also* **Vairāgya.**

Guide to Obscure English Words

Some of the entries herein are listed not in their root form but as they appear within this volume. Simple definitions are given according to the specific context in which they have been used. For more precise and elaborate explanations, readers may consult a comprehensive dictionary.

Abstrusity—a subject that is difficult to understand

Accede—to consent or agree to

Accouterments—items typically used in or by (and thus symbolizing) a specific kind of organization

Acolyte—a devout follower

Acumen—keen insight

Adage—a traditional saying that expresses a generally accepted truth

Adjudge—to regard or consider

Admixture—a mixture (especially wherein one component is dissimilar to the others)

Adroitness—expertise and quick-wittedness in an urgent situation

Adulterine—born of adultery

Affective—pertaining to the emotions

Affray—public fight

Albeit—although, even though

Allocution—a formal speech

Amaranthine—eternally beautiful like an unfading flower

Ancillary—additional and supplementary

Antipathetic—adverse

Apocryphal—of questionable authenticity

Apologue—a fable (especially with animals as characters)

Apotheosisism—the doctrine that a person may be worshiped as if he were God

Appetency—strong desire

Apposite—strikingly appropriate or relevant

Approbation—praise

Apropos—relevant

Arcanum—hidden matter, profound secret

Archetypal—pertaining to an original example or model of a thing or type

Archipelago—a large, often scattered, group of islands

Argot—a specialized language or idiom

Assay—to subject to testing

Assiduously—carefully and diligently

Assuagement—relief

Baksheesh—tip, donation

Beleaguered—attacked from all sides

Blackguard—a wholly unprincipled person, scoundrel

Blandishment—gentle flattery meant for obtaining something from a person

Brigandry—armed thievery

Brute—*(adj)* animal-like

Burgeon—to flourish

Cadence—balanced rhythmic flow (as in music)

Canonical—of an established law or principle (especially concerning religious or scriptural matters)

Cant—hypocritically pious talk

Caprice—whim

Cashiered—removed from a post (usually for disciplinary reasons)

Catchpenny—cheap methods to attract interest

Cathonitheism—(presumably idiolectic for *kathenotheism*) worship of one god at a time, worship of one god while considering worship of other gods equally valid

Cavil—a trivial and annoying objection

Cede—to give under pressure

Cerebration—mental or intellectual activity

Charade—a deceptive but easily detected pretense

Charlatan—a fraud; one who makes an elaborate show of being accomplished in a particular line

Cherubic—angelic

Cogency—being intellectually convincing

Cognomen—surname

Comestible—an edible item, food

Commensurate—corresponding or in line with

Commonweal—the general welfare

Concinnity—harmony of parts to the whole or to each other

Concubine—mistress, a woman kept as an unofficial wife

Conduit—a passage that facilitates free flow

Conflagration—a huge fire

Confute—to prove an argument or proposition to be wrong

Consentaneity—agreement by all

Consonance—accord, agreement

Contradistinction—distinction by contrast or opposition

Contrariety—being contrary

Cortege—a group of servants

Counterpart—a duplicate or close likeness; a person or thing that closely resembles another or can substitute for the other; one of two parts that together form a whole or perfectly complement each other

Crass—gross, born of ignorance

Crore—ten million

Cudgel—to beat

Culpable—blameworthy

Dastardly—cowardly and sneaky

Dearth—lack, scarcity

Delectable—tasty, very enjoyable

Deracinate—to uproot, eradicate, or exterminate

Detente—an agreement between rivals meant for reducing mutual hostility

Detractor—one who attempts to spoil another's good reputation through criticism

Detritus—accumulated debris

Dewan—(a former term for) a prime minister or other high official in regional governments in India

Diaspora—a dispersed people who formerly lived as one

Diatribe—a bitter and abusive verbal attack

Didactic—instructive

Diglossia—use of both a lower and higher quality of a language within a society

Dint—means, effect

Dispraise—to speak words of disapproval

Dissolute—depraved, engaged in immorality

Distich—two lines of verse that end in similar sounds

Doleful—morose, sad

Dross—that which is extrinsic; rubbish

Ecclesiastic—pertaining to church affairs

Efflorescence—a flowering, development like that of a flower

Egress—to come out

Eidetically—involving unusually accurate and vivid recall

Elocution—style of public speaking

Emasculation—a removal of masculinity, strength, or vigor

Emic—concerning an attempt to understand a culture according to its own concepts; from an insider's viewpoint

Envisage—to view mentally (especially a future possibility)

Envoy—messenger; concluding section of a literary work

Epicure—a person fond of fine food

Epistemology—methods of gaining knowledge

Equitable—fair

Eremite—a religious hermit

Eschew—to avoid

Etic—concerning an attempt to understand a culture according to preconceived concepts; from an outsider's viewpoint

Eudemonistic—pertaining to the theory that the basis of morality is the tendency of right actions to produce happiness

Eugenic—*(adj.)* pertaining to selective human breeding

Eugenics—selective human breeding (see vol. 1, p. 308, fn †)

Euhemerism—considering myths to be factual accounts

Evince—to bring forth

Excrescence—an unwanted byproduct

Exegesis—textual analysis (especially of scripture)

Exegetical—pertaining to analysis of scripture

Exiguous—very little

Extrapolate—infer or derive from incomplete information

Fascicular—produced in volumes (of books)

Fastidious—excessively concerned with details

Fatuity—foolishness

Feckless—careless, irresponsible

Felicitous—characterized by happiness or good fortune

Felicity—happiness, cause of happiness

Felon—a performer of a severe crime

Feted—given honor

Firmament—the sky

Flaccid—easy to bend

Flay—to strongly criticize or whip

Flummoxed—confused

Forswear—to fully give up

Fraught with—full of

Fusillade—a sustained verbal attack

Gaff—a mistake

Genteelly—elegantly, politely, with upper-class behavior

Gloss—a commentary

Gossamer—something light or without substance

Gracile—thin

Guileless—without deception

Gushily—with marked expression of emotion

Halcyon—happily, tranquil

Hebetation—dullness

Hegemony—unchallengeable dominance

Henotheism—the worship of one god without denying the existence of other gods

Hermeneutics—methods of interpretation (particularly of scripture)

Hoary—old and therefore venerable

Hone—to render more useful

Hullabaloo—a loud and confused situation

Humbug—nonsense, a hoax

Hypocoristically—by applying a nickname

Hypostasis—underlying substance, the essential nature of the individual

Hypothetical—proposed yet unproved

Ideation—the capacity for (or the act of) forming ideas

Ignoramus—an ignorant person

Ilk—type

Imbroglio—a complicated and bitter disagreement

Impetuous—moving forcefully

Inane—idiotic

Inculcate—to teach by repetition

Inditement—composition (of writing)

Indomitable—unconquerable

Iniquity—unrighteousness, injustice

Inordinately—too much

Inosculate—to blend or unite

Insolent—rude to a superior

Intellection—a line of thought or reasoning; an idea

Interdicting—stopping

Interlarded—*(adj.)* with something added in between

Internecine—relating to conflict (within a group) that leads to mutual harm

Inveigled—won over by coaxing, flattery, or artful talk

Invidious—giving rise to bad feelings against

Inviolable—incapable of being opposed

Irenic—peaceful, conducive for peace

Jibe—to mock with hateful words

Juridical—legal

Kowtow—to bow to, submit

Laic—a layperson

Lakh—one hundred thousand

Languorous—lacking motivation, lazy

Largess—generosity (in attitude or in bestowal of gifts)

Lascivious—lustful

Latitudinarianism—the accepting as equally valid even widely differing opinions, especially in religion

Laudation—an act of praise

Lexicography—the making of a dictionary

Lexicon—a language's words and definitions

Licentiousness—indulgence in lust

Lineament—a definitive characteristic

Loci—points of focus

Locution—a phrase; speaking style

Lucre—monetary gain

Lucubration—great study

Luxuriant—abundant in vegetation

Mahout—an elephant driver

Malfeasance—wrongdoing (especially by an official)

Masquerade—to disguise oneself

Maund—approximately forty kilograms

Maverick—an individualist; a deliberately unusual person

Mellifluous—flowing smoothly and sweetly

Mensural—relating to measure

Minacious—causing fear

Misoneism—hatred of (or fear of) change or innovation

Missive—a letter (of correspondence)

Modicum—a small amount

Modus operandi—(Latin) “method of operation”;one's personal style of executing activity

Moiety—one of two equal parts

Multivalency—having many values or meanings

Muse—(1) a guiding spirit or a source of inspiration; (2) to deeply consider

Mutative—changed

Narcissistic—self-loving, egotistic

Natter—meaningless talk

Neologism—a new word or usage

Neoteric—modern, new

Niggling—of the nature to point out petty faults

Nigh—almost, close (in time)

Noetic—related to thinking

Noisome—annoying

Nonce—unique; invented for a particular context

Non-malefic—not causing harm (see Glossary)

Nugatory—worthless

Nugget—a small lump (especially of gold)

Obdurate—stubborn

Obeisant—respectful

Obfuscate—to make unclear

Obsequies—death ceremonies

Obsequious—of the nature of a yes-man

Obstreperous—aggressively and noisily defiant

Ontology—(*philosophy*) the study of the nature of existence in general, or of a particular subject; that which concerns the essence of a subject or entity

Oppugn—to oppose

Orison—prayer

Orthographer—an authority on spelling

Palavering—talking meaninglessly

Palmary—great, prominent

Panegyric—elaborate spoken or written praise

Paralogical—illogical, unreasonable

Parlance—manner of speaking, idiom

Parley—informal discussion between enemies

Parlous—risky

Patrimony—an estate inherited from one's father

Pean—a joyful song of praise

Pedant—one who is proud of his bookish knowledge yet has little actual understanding

Penchant—a liking

Peon—a menial messenger

Perdition—eternal suffering in hell

Peremptory—self-assured

Philanderer—a man who indulges sexually with a woman he does not intend to marry, or who indulges in multiple sexual affairs

Plangent—expressing lamentation

Pluck—the spirit to tackle difficulties

Polity—a method of organization

Praxes—practices based on a branch of learning

Preponderant—having great (or greater) influence, power, or number

Prevenient—occurring before

Prig—one who is overly concerned with conformity and propriety and is smug and arrogant

Pristine—original and pure

Procrastinator—one who tends to delay matters simply due to idleness

Proffer—to offer or present for consideration

Propitious—tending to favor

Prosaic—commonplace, unremarkable

Proscribed—*(adj)* prohibited, forbidden as harmful or unlawful

Proscription—a prohibition

Provender—food

Prude—one who is much concerned with being (or appearing to be) proper, modest, or righteous

Pseudo-latitudinarianism—presumably Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's prefixing *pseudo* to the word *latitudinarianism* (q.v.) is meant to emphasize the falsity and hypocrisy inherent in such an attempt

Psilanthropism—the doctrine that Jesus Christ was merely a human being

Puerility—childishness

Punctilious—conscientious, attentive to details

Putative—supposed

Queazy—uneasy

Quell—to quieten or suppress

Raison d'être—reason for existence

Raj—imperial British rule of India

Raucously—in a rough voice

Razzmatazz—an extravagant showiness devoid of substantial meaning

Recondite—difficult to understand due to its high scholarly level

Rectitude—straight, righteous, correct

Redacted—edited, revised, converted to written form

Redolent—suggestive

Remonstrate—to protest

Rent—torn

Reparation—something done toward repairing damage

Repast—meal

Rile—to become angry

Rote—concerning a method of learning by repeated utterance but which usually does not inculcate an understanding of the subject matter

Rout—to completely defeat

Salacious—lustful

Saliferous—containing salt

Sally—(*verb*) to set out boldly

Sans—without

Sardonically—sarcastically

Scapegrace—an incurable rascal

Scintillating—sparkling

Scurrility—a grossly abusive verbal attack

Scuttle—destroy

Sedentary—by nature inactive

Sempiternal—eternal

Sequestered—secluded

Serendipity—finding good things without looking for them

Seriate—coming in a series

Sexagenarian—*(adj.)* being between sixty and seventy years old

Sham—a fraudulent show

Sheen—luster

Simian—of or relating to monkeys

Sinecurist—one with a secure position and who does little work

Sloth—laziness

Sluggish—tending to be lazy and slow

Slushy—sentimental

Sojourn—*(noun)* a temporary stay in a place; *(verb)* to stay temporarily in a place

Solicit—to earnestly or repeatedly request

Solitudinarian—one who prefers to live alone

Sortie—a sudden attack

Spawn—to come (or bring) into being; to develop

Spurious—false, bogus, counterfeit

Stymie—to block or frustrate

Subsume—to include within something larger

Sycophant—one who gives praise to gain personal advantage

Taciturnity—tendency to speak only when necessary

Tack—a new course of action based on changed circumstances

Tendentiousness—an intentional controversial bias

Therianthropism—worship of deities who are partly animal and partly human

Theriomorphism—worship of deities who have animal forms

Tilt—inclination

Toponym—a place name

Torpidity—slowness, dullness

Triumphalism—considering one's religion superior to others

Tutelage—guidance, instruction

Unbenign—unfavorable, unbeneficial

Unobtrusively—in a manner such as not to attract notice

Unviable—impossible to accomplish

Vanguard—the forefront of a movement or activity

Venality—the tendency to accept bribes

Veracity—conformity to truth or accuracy; genuineness

Verisimilitude—a subject that merely seems to be true

Viand—a food item

Vis-à-vis—compared with

Viz.—namely

Volitionally—deliberately

Voluble—inclined to and expert at talking

Vot ary— a devout believer

Wayfare—to journey (especially by foot)

Weal—a healthy state

Wend—to proceed

Zamindar—a feudal landlord in India

Bengali and Sanskrit Quotations

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Footnotes

* References for *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* are according to the same system used for *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta.*

† From its fourth year, seventh edition, the *Gauḍīya* numbering system changed. Instead of restarting the numbering in each new issue, page numbers became cumulative throughout consecutive editions and were restarted in each new year of publication. *Gauḍīya* 4.7 began at p. 155.

* *Anyābhilāṣitā-śūnya*—For the full verse, see vol. 1, p. 283. *Unnatojjvala-rasa*—From Cc 1.1.4. (See the full verse in vol. 3, p. 79)

† "The best of the followers of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī" refers to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who is extolled as *rūpānuga-vara* in the standard *praṇāma* mantra for him, given in this *maṅgalācaraṇa.*

Encapsulated within the second and third verses of the standard *praṇāma*-mantras to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī (given above) are the concepts of his giving knowledge of *sambandha, abhidheya,* and *prayojana.* (See Cc 1.7.146 and 2.6.178)

These *praṇāma*-mantras to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī succinctly encapsulate and illuminate the essential esoteric ingredients of his personality, mission, and glories, and thus set the tenor for understanding the entire contents of this book.

* See Glossary: Dust.

* For an explanation of *conditioned soul,* see vol. 1, p. 327.

* The presently available *Sarasvatī-jayaśrī* is incomplete. Its first 25 chapters are remembrances of four early disciples; the subsequent 11 chapters consist of historical and philosophical details collated by Śrīpāda Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda. It was to be the first part of a "Vaibhava-parva," but the intended remaining 72 chapters never manifested. There was also to be a "Śrī-parva" of 108 chapters, for which Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda Prabhu spent much time interviewing Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura for information to be included therein. Based on those interviews, the first volume of "Śrī-parva," which included information of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's early life, was almost ready to be printed in the early 1940s, yet the work was stopped. According to one source, years later a devotee retrieved the galley proofs from Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda Prabhu's home, but the bag in which he kept them was stolen. However, apparently it was deliberately destroyed. (See vol. 1, p. 309, fn *)

* Half-hen logic (*ardha-kukkuṭī-nyāya*)—desiring to save money by not having to feed his hen, a foolish man cut off its head, vainly expecting the bird to still yield eggs from its rear. This

maxim is often cited to portray the futility in accepting some scriptural teachings while whimsically rejecting others.

* An example of such woeful ignorance is in Professor Dimock's introduction to the Harvard edition of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta.* Despite being a lifelong scholar of Bengali Vaiṣṇavism, Dimock stated that Bārṣobhānavīdayita Dāsa and Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī were separate authors of two different commentaries, both called *Anubhāṣya,* within different editions of the Gauḍīya Maṭha publication of that text. Even a cursory inspection would have revealed that the "two" commentaries are the same, with merely the author's name presented differently. (Edward C. Dimock, Jr., trans., *Caitanya Caritāmṛta of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 66–67.

* In Vedic understanding, the concept of low birth has an import quite different from that of the politely democratic "lower class" of standard English usage. For further explanation, see vol. 2, pp. 112–13.

* This topic is further described in vol. 1, pp. 461–62.

* See vol. 1, p. xxi, fn *, and vol. 1, p. 309, fn *.

† Let us not make the same mistake in this generation. Although His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda was the first *ācārya* in history about whom extensive biographical detail has been recorded, still, the remembrances of most of his disciples remain unrecorded. Devotees are naturally eager for such memoirs, for hearing about the *paramparā-ācāryas* gives inspiration, instruction, and hope. Even though in his books His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda has given all knowledge required for going back to Godhead, nevertheless we request all of his disciples to expand the ocean of nectar by recording and publishing their experiences with him, even if they be few or apparently insignificant. Let us collect and publish dozens of books on the pastimes of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

* His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda wrote: "Even if there is misunderstanding among the godbrothers *(sic)* of my guru-*mahārāja,* none of them deviated from the transcendental loving service of Kṛṣṇa." (Letter, 18 November 1967)

† Śrīpāda Śānta Mahārāja came to Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the early days of ISKCON in Russia and later took initiation and *sannyāsa* in the contemporary Gauḍīya Maṭha. He has since been bestowed the dress of a *bābājī* within the Sārasvata *paramparā.*

* Common myths regarding Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura:

(a) When denied initiation by Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī, he threatened to commit suicide. It is recorded that in that circumstance Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī quoted Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, *karuṇā nā haile kāṅdiyā kāṅdiyā prāṇa nā rākhibo āra:* "Without your mercy, I,

weeping and weeping, will no longer sustain my life" (see vol. 1, p. 29). Yet there is no indication that he actually planned to kill himself.

(b) Upon meeting any Māyāvādī on the street, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would publicly berate or even physically assault him.

These two myths apparently have wide currency only within ISKCON.

The unauthorized circulation of my initial research notes for this book also increased the inventory of mythology concerning Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, for further investigation revealed that several of the anecdotes related therein were flights of fancy rather than factual events.

* An example of inaccuracy in old documentation: *Parama Gurudeva Prabhupāda Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī,* published by a disciple of Śrīpāda Auḍulomi Mahārāja, quotes Auḍulomi Mahārāja (p. 37) as averring that an account in *Sarasvatī-jayaśrī* (p. 171) of his being initiated on the same day as Paramānanda Prabhu, Vaiṣṇava Prabhu, and Madhusūdana Babu is incorrect, for they were initiated before him. And even within the text of *Sarasvatī-jayaśrī* there are contradictions between the narratives of different contributors.

For why certain noteworthy incidents apparently were never previously featured in print, see vol. 1, p. 306.

* Many passages culled from *Sarasvatī-jayaśrī,* or told by Jati Śekhara Prabhu, have deliberately been left unreferenced, so as not to increase the already inflated number of references in this book.

* How he received this name is explained in vol. 1, p. 13.

† In modern Indian languages *jyotiṣa* is generally understood to mean astrology of a mostly predictive nature. Yet the complete Vedic science of *jyotiṣa* comprehends both astronomy and astrology. Vedic astronomy was based on *śāstrīya* descriptions rather than observation and was primarily meant to facilitate astrology, a discipline having far greater scope than that commonly ascribed to it or understood nowadays. It appears that Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's interest in mathematics and astronomy was linked mainly to a scientific interest in the nature of the universe and in the practical application to the calendar, rather than in analytic or predictive astrology.

* This information is based on verbal evidence gathered from disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and is also supported by a statement in the *Gauḍīya* (15.23– 24.10). This contradicts the version of *Prabhupāda Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura* (p. 69) that this name was first given upon his initiation by Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī.

† For instance, the title Bhaktivinoda had been bestowed by the much-resp ected Vaiṣṇava community of Baghnapara.

‡ Śrīmad Bhakti Pramoda Purī Mahārāja is recorded as having stated that even in childhood Bimalā Prasāda was referred to by his spiritual preceptors as Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 18.1.32 (1915, prior to his *sannyāsa*) records his name as such.

§ Śuddhā Sarasvatī is mentioned in *C*b 1.1.19 and 1.9.225. In Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's commentary on Cb 1.1.19 he has stated: "The words spoken in connection with Kṛṣṇa's service by pure living entities who desire to serve Lord Kṛṣṇa under the guidance of Baladeva Prabhu are called Śuddhā (transcendental) Sarasvatī. The words devoid of connection with Kṛṣṇa's service, spoken by those who desire to satisfy their senses and ignore the guidance of Baladeva Prabhu, are called *asati* (unchaste) or *duṣṭā* (wicked) Sarasvatī." Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura further discusses *śuddhā* Sarasvatī and *duṣṭā* Sarasvatī in his commentary on Cb 1.13.22. And in *Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.25) there is mention of *divyā* (divine) Sarasvatī.

* See *Śrī Śrī Dayita-dāsa-daśakam,* 4 (vol. 3, p. 181).

* In endnotes this is shortened to "Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda."

* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura never considered Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura as an ordinary, mundane father (see vol. 2, p. 204). Nonetheless, following the example of many Gauḍīya Maṭha publications in referring to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, herein the word *father* is also used conventionally. Certainly in a wholly transcendental sense, *bhaktivinoda* eternally gives birth to *bhaktisiddhānta.*

* Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura also wrote in Urdu a small book on law and composed a few songs in Brajbuli (a literary dialect of Bengali, developed exclusively by Gauḍīya poets). It appears that many of his works were never published and are now lost. For instance, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī once described writings by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura for children, which are no longer extant:

"Yajñeśvara Basu had a house on the Bāna Gaṅgā. Dīnabandhu Sena had his house in Icchapur. Both desired to give thorough instructions on spiritual matters to their children, in the manner imparted to Christian and Muslim children. At their behest Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura wrote several volumes with questions and answers, so that from the beginning, Vaiṣṇavas' children could learn about religion. The name of that work was *Dharma-śikṣā.* He wrote a first, second, and third volume for different levels. These were prepared in manuscript form but not printed."

* For more on his achievements, see vol. 2, pp. 201–2.

* In 1850, at age eleven, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was married to five-year-old Sayāmaṇī. In 1860 she bore a son, Annadā Prasāda, but ten months later she died. Soon thereafter Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura married Bhagavatī-devī, whose first son expired in 1868 when just one month old. Śrīmatī Bhagavatī-devī subsequently delivered eight sons: Rādhikā Prasāda (1870), Kamalā Prasāda (1872), Bimalā Prasāda (1874), Baradā Prasāda (1877), Birajā Prasāda (1878),

Lalitā Prasāda (1880), and Śailajā Prasāda (1892). She also gave birth to five daughters: Saudāminī (1864), Kādambinī (1866), Kṛṣṇa Vinodinī (1884), Śyāma Sarojinī (1886), and Hari Pramodinī (1888).

† Kanaka-daṇḍī—"Holder of a golden staff";Sāragrāhi-vaiṣṇava-mahimāṣṭaka—"eight verses in glorification of *sāragrāhi* Vaiṣṇavas."

‡ It is not clear whether this is the Kṛṣṇānanda who was the king of Kheturi, in Bengal, and father of the great Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura. Contextually it seems likely, but were it so, most probably it would have been stated in this *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* article.

* It is a principle of Vedic culture that immediately upon awakening, one should recall greatly pious persons and their outstanding qualities, thus invoking their blessings and setting an ideal to emulate throughout the day.

† Preta-śilā—a specific stone upon which oblations of food are offered to deceased forefathers.

‡ Lord Jagannātha allows Himself to be carried onto a cart and pulled by His devotees as if dependent on them, but by His wish the cart sometimes malfunctions or becomes immovable.

* There are differing opinions as to which Nṛsiṁha-mantra was given, but it is generally understood to be the one beginning *ugraṁ vīraṁ mahā-viṣṇum*.

† In *Śrī-Śrīla Prabhupādera Vaiśiṣṭya-sampada o Samādhāna-sampada* (pp. 4–5), Śrīmad Bhakti Vilāsa Bhāratī Mahārāja, a disciple of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, has detailed the significance of Kūrmadeva, the tortoise form of Viṣṇu, in *rasa-vicāra.* Kūrmadeva is described in *alaṅkāra-śāstra* as the deity of *adbhuta-rasa,* the mellow of wonder that makes other *rasas* ever newly wonderful. This wonder is most wonderful in the *līlā* of Śrī Gaurāṅga, who is Kṛṣṇa attempting to taste the wonder of Himself, and even more wonderfully, distributing the wonder of His most wonderful pastimes to all, including the most fallen. Therefore in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī repeatedly uses the words *acintya, camatkāra,* and *citra,* all of which indicate inconceivability and wonder. In Cc 3.17.16 he also describes that when all *rasas* simultaneously appear in Śrī Caitanya-deva, He becomes overwhelmed and takes, or is overtaken by, the form of Kūrma. The importance of Kūrmadeva in *rasa-vicāra* is also hinted at by His being invoked in the last chapter of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (12.13.2), the topmost *śāstra,* which brings all Vedic knowledge to the conclusion of *rasa.* Thus Bimalā Prasāda's worship of Kūrma is not merely incidental, but of deep import.

For more on astonishment (*camatkāra*) being the essence of *rasa,* see Kavi-karṇapūra's *Alaṅkāra-kaustubha* 5.7.

‡ Those verses are long-since lost.

* "Materialistic knowledge converts the *jīva* into an ass"—*jaḍa-vidyā... jīvake karaye gādhā.*

(*Śaraṇāgati*)

* *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* was probably in the form of a handwritten paper manuscript, as printed editions were not available then. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura personally had at least partially copied some of the *Sandarbhas* of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī and engaged scribes to replicate some of the other Gosvāmī works.

* *Viddha-śākteya*—a corrupted votary of Durgā.

† Traditionally accepted as having been disseminated originally by demigods and *ṛṣis, Sūrya-siddhānta* is a complex mathematical work on astronomy, comprehending: (1) computation of the mean and true positions of planets, (2) determination of latitude and longitude and local celestial coordinates, (3) prediction of full and partial eclipses of the moon and sun, (4) prediction of conjunctions of planets with stars and other planets, (5) calculation of the rising and setting times of planets and stars, (6) calculation of the moon's phases, (7) calculation of the dates of various astrologically significant planetary combinations, (8) discussion of cosmography, (9) discussion of astronomical instruments, and (10) discussion of varieties of time.

* *Jyotir-tīrtha*—an expert in astronomical calculations, particularly those for determining timings for *yajñas,* festivals, oblations, rituals, and so on.

* In this context, Ārya is understood to mean “Hindu.”

† This is further discussed in vol. 1, p. 36.

‡ It appears that without compromising the principles of traditional *jyotiṣa,* to a certain extent Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī incorporated Western methodology into it, particularly by employing modern (instead of Vedic) mathematics (See: Danavir Goswami, *Vedic Cosmology* [Kansas City, Mo., U.S.A: Rupanuga Vedic College, 2003]).

* *Bodhodaya* (The arising of knowledge) was a widely read children's book. When relating this incident many years later, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī simply mentioned that a “staunch theist” objected to Īśvara Candra's statement, without specifying who it was. B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja later clarified that it was Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī himself.

* According to some sources the *paṇḍita's* name was Pṛthvīdhara Sharma.

Sandhi—the system of euphonically adjusting the final and initial letters of contiguous words as well as within the word (*rūpa*) between it and suffix (*pratyaya*) or prefix (*upasarga*) or infix (*āgama*) in the process of declension or conjugation, or formation of new words.

† Pāṇini—the outstanding ancient authority on Sanskrit grammar.

* Re the tangle with the college principal, see vol. 1, pp. 192–93.

* Tripura—a nominally independent princely state east of Bengal that had been governed by Vaiṣṇava monarchs for more than three hundred years, since preachers dispatched by Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura had inspired the then king to adopt Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement.

* Yet it appears that from 1901, after accompanying Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura to Purī, he had largely withdrawn from government service. (See vol. 1, p. 34)

† *Gherā*—a compound or living quarters. The *gherās* of the families of priests engaged in worshiping the prominent deities of Vṛndāvana are known as Rādhā-ramaṇa-gherā, Madana-mohana-gherā, and so on.

‡ Rādhā-ramaṇa Goswamis—seminal descendants of early worshipers of the Rādhā-ramaṇa deity who by dint of their lineage are entitled to perform and supervise services to Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa. This family was and still is much respected and influential in Vṛndāvana, and primarily by their endeavor Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism had flourished in the central and western regions of North India, in which areas the family had innumerable disciples.

By encouraging and helping Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, the immensely respected Sanskrit scholar and preacher Madhusūdana Goswami much contributed to his popular acceptance. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura awarded Madhusūdana the title Sārvabhauma, "Sovereign." On Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's behest Madhusūdana Goswami helped oversee procedures for establishing the deities of Śrī Gaurasundara and Śrī Viṣṇupriyā in Māyāpur, during which he was hosted by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura at his house in Godruma. Although born in a "Goswami family," Madhusūdana would say that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was a true *gosvāmī.* He also much admired and assisted Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī.

In 1925 a series of articles by Madhusūdana was published in *Ananda Bazar Patrika* in support of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's stance that by *pāñcarātrikī dīkṣā* any person, regardless of birthcaste, can attain twice-born status and qualify to worship *śālagrāma-śilā.* In 1926 the *Gauḍīya* published Madhusūdana Goswami's disquisition defeating erroneous theories of the *gaurāṅga-nāgarī apa-sampradāya.*

* Bṛhaspati—(1) the planet Jupiter; (2) the guru of the demigods.

† *Catuṣpāṭhī*—"school where the four Vedas are taught."

‡ That the Catuṣpāṭhī ran at least until 1917 is clear from its description in the almanac for that year, prepared by Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī. From descriptions (by other sources) of his activities, it is also clear that after his *dīkṣā* in 1900, he personally was not much involved in the Catuṣpāṭhī.

§ *Jyotirvid*—astrologer.

* *Nivedana*—offering, informing, request.

* That song, beginning *kothāy go premamayī rādhe,* was later revealed by Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī to Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu and possibly a few others. It was sung only on Bābājī Mahārāja's *tirobhāva-tithi* at his *samādhi,* yet not until after Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's passing was it published, by Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu. It seems inconsistent with Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's policy that this highly confidential text be widely distributed or recited.

† It is generally accepted that Bābājī Mahārāja could not even sign his own name (which was not uncommon—most of India's population was illiterate). Yet he would offer verbal commentary during readings of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* possessed some books and sometimes wrote letters (dictated to and sent by Nafar Candra Pal Chaudhuri) to apparent disciples; hence he was not wholly unscholarly.

* Such reasoning by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura should not be considered sophistry, but a logical harmonizing of his guru-*mahārāja's* first and most important instruction to him—that he "preach the absolute truth, keeping aside all other activities" (see vol. 1, p. 30). As stated by Prof. N.K. Sanyal (*Harmonist,* 31 May 1936, 32.19.439):

"[Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī] was enjoined by Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja not to stay in Calcutta.... But [Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī] did not receive the advice in its literal sense. He could understand that those words were expressive of the most profound concern for the spiritual well-being of the citizens of the premier city of India, who had no time or inclination for giving their serious thought to the needs of their souls. He accordingly conceived the resolution of preaching the transcendental service of Kṛṣṇa to the peoples of all the great cities of the world and to make Calcutta the headquarters of this propaganda."

For more on why Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura "disobeyed" his guru's order to not go to Calcutta, see vol. 1, p. 263 and pp. 368–69.

* After being requested eighteen times by Śrī Rāmānuja, Goṣṭhīpūrṇa finally revealed to him the mantra *oṁ namo nārāyaṇāya,* declaring that whoever chanted this mantra would attain Vaikuṇṭha, and warning him to keep it secret, as impure people were unfit to receive it. Almost immediately thereafter, Rāmānuja went to a public place and loudly revealed the mantra to all. On Rāmānuja's next visit, Goṣṭhīpūrṇa angrily told him that because of disobeying his order Rāmānuja would have to go to hell. Rāmānuja happily replied that he was prepared to enter hell if by doing so he could save others from going there. Upon hearing this, Goṣṭhīpūrṇa became very pleased, and understanding the greatness of his disciple, stated that Rāmānuja was fit to be his guru.

† *Sata* (Oriya)—seven.

‡ "Reveal the service to deities" corresponds to the Sanskrit term *nitya-sevā-prakaṭa* used by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī to indicate the eternality of deities and service to Them. Alternatively, the word *install* was employed in English publications of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, which although not inaccurate, is less precise and descriptive.

* See "Invented Kīrtana" (vol. 2, pp. 161–64).

* Systematic compilation of this encyclopedia, to be known as *Vaiṣṇava-mañjuṣā,* eventually began in 1920. (See vol. 1, pp. 79–81)

Śiśira Kumāra Ghosh, owner and editor of the Calcutta newspaper *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* was a famous promoter of popular Vaiṣṇavism. He was also a friend and admirer of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, whom he dubbed the "Seventh Gosvāmī" (in a letter of 1888 from Ghosh to Bhaktivinoda, which was reproduced in *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 19.2.68–70).

† For more on the role of Bāpudeva Śāstrī in westernizing Indian astronomy, see: Danavir Goswami, "Copernican Revolution," chap. 8 in *Vedic Cosmology*.

* His sudden abandonment of *jyotiṣa* was apparently in response to his *gurudeva's* order to "preach the absolute truth, keeping aside all other activities." (See vol. 1, p. 30)

† Although nowadays much research may be undertaken simply by browsing through libraries or the internet, in the early twentieth century in many disciplines research entailed extensive fieldwork.

* The transcendental benefit that Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī gained from this apparent banishment is described in vol. 1, p. 367.

† With 16 names in one recitation of the *mahā-mantra,* and 108 recitations in a round, 1 lakh of names are chanted in just over 58 rounds. However, a lakh of names is generally equated with 64 rounds.

Chanting 3 lakhs of names daily had been the practice of Nāmācārya Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, and that example was considered the ideal of *nāma-bhajana* to be aspired for by practioners of the holy name.

‡ *Śata*—one hundred; *koṭi*—a crore; *nāma*—name.

This deity of Lord Caitanya is now worshiped at Rudradvīpa Gauḍīya Maṭha, near Māyāpur.

* "My *prabhu*" was stated in humility, referring to his disciple Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī.

* The purport of this rhetorical question is that both Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī eternally and constantly reside at Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa, so even if they

appear to dwell apart, actually there can never be any separation between them.

† This account is redacted from published lectures of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. In *Āmāra Prabhura Kathā,* a biographical sketch of Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, it is given in brief with some differing details—for instance, the name Madhu being given for Mitra. Probably both were names of the same person, Madhu being a first name or an abbreviated form of a name such as Madhusūdana, and Mitra a cognomen. Summarizing these anecdotes, *Parama Guru Śrī Gaura Kiśora* (pp. 45–46) describes that some days after being exposed by Bābājī Mahārāja, M. (as his name is given therein) became extremely sick and was taken back to secular life by a family member.

* Śrī Candraśekhara Ācārya was the husband of Śacimātā's sister.

* Śyāmānandīs—members of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava sect whose gurus were seminal descendants of Rasikānanda Prabhu, the foremost disciple of the great Śyāmānanda Prabhu. Since its inception some 350 years before, the Śyāmānandī *sampradāya* had been the largest in the Gauḍīya world. Although its scope was almost wholly within Orissa and Midnapore (formerly part of Orissa), there its influence on religious and cultural life was immeasurable.

From the erstwhile family home of Rasikānanda Prabhu in Gopīvallabhpur, Midnapore, the Śyāmānandī *ācāryas* oversaw more than one hundred *maṭhas* and deities, some of them famous and important. And although most Śyāmānandīs were not trained in or committed to ideal practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, still eighteen royal families were proud to introduce themselves as disciples of the *mahāntas* of Gopīvallabhpur, as were more than a lakh each of zamindar families and other *brāhmaṇa* and *kṣatriya* families.

* Mayurbhanj was a princely state in northern Orissa, and now constitutes the northernmost district of Orissa. Baripada, about sixteen miles south-southwest of Gopīvallabhpur, is the state capital and former royal seat.

† Considering Vaiṣṇava etiquette, it is also quite likely that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura did not wish to personally lead an attack on a position declared under the chairmanship of his *dīkṣā*-guru, Śrī Bipina Bihārī Goswami.

* At the time of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura the traditional authority of *śāstra,* coupled with that derived from the behavior of previous exemplars, was still widely accepted as the basis of Vedic understanding and culture. This point provides the key to comprehending much of what he did and said, what his mission stood for, the basis of many of the accusations made by and against him, and his line of defense against such attacks.

* Later Ananta Basu was initiated with the name Ananta Vāsudeva and became a prominent disciple of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. (See vol. 2, pp. 341–45)

† A topic not directly connected to Vaiṣṇavism. *Mātṛ*—mother (in this context, Durgā).

* See a translation of this verse in vol. 2, p. 333.

* For a succinct definition of *ratyābhāsa,* see vol. 2, p. 147.

* For the actual purport of *gaura-nāgara-vara* in that instance, see vol. 2, p. 133.

† Just north of Krishnanagar, Dhubuliya was the nearest railway station to Māyāpur.

* Obviously the value of money has changed over time. Nowadays but a trifle, at that time thirty-six rupees was a considerable sum. In a 1973 lecture, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda recalled that fifty years prior, ghee cost at most 1 rupee per kilo, and a servant would be paid 10 or 12 rupees per month. (Approximate rates in 2009: ghee —Rs. 190; a servant—Rs. 1600)

* In Vedic tradition the body of a *paramahaṁsa* is not burned, but is placed in a *samādhi* and worshiped.

* See Glossary: Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣad.

† Later, Umāpati was initiated with the name Kuñja Bihārī and became a prominent disciple of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. (See vol. 2, pp. 332–39)

* See vol. 2, p. 435, fn †.

† Although Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī was leading a highly renounced existence, he had not accepted *bābājī-veśa* (acceptance of which marks formal induction as a renunciant).

* No information is available on why the brothers went to jail, but that they did is mentioned by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in a letter.

Re how Bābājī Mahārāja's *samādhi* came to be moved, see vol. 1, pp. 372–73.

* Gaura-*nāma,* Gaura-*dhāma,* Gaura-*kāma*—respectively, the transcendental name, abode, and desire of Gaura.

* In *Prabhupada Saraswati Thakur* (p. 18) these instructions are presented as having been given in a letter by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, but in a missive of 1 April 1926 (*Patrāvalī* 2.50–52) Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī stated that they were imparted verbally.

† This incident is described in *Sarasvatī-jayaśrī.* The associates of Caitanya Mahāprabhu had lamented upon His abandoning His family and because of His imminent departure from home and their association. But Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī had been a *brahmacārī* from birth, nor was it likely that he would forsake his associates, for on the same day that he accepted *sannyāsa* he established a new temple in Māyāpur. Furthermore, whereas Mahāprabhu's associates were distressed by His giving up His beautiful hair and entering a life of severe difficulty, Śrī

Siddhānta Sarasvatī had been observing rigorous austerities even prior to his formal acceptance of *sannyāsa*. Therefore it is unknown why the followers of Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī grieved upon his entering the renounced order.

* Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī—Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa (see vol. 1, p. 341). For further discussion of possible tactical reasons for Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's acceptance of *sannyāsa* and founding of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, see vol. 1, p. 165, and vol. 2, p. 203.

* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was not actually recommending offering tobacco to Kṛṣṇa, for doing so is against Vaiṣṇava principles. Rather, as an expert preacher he conveyed the essential truth, that everything is meant for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa, in a manner that even an addict could appreciate.

† This trip is described in vol. 1, pp. 223–29.

‡ This statement by the non-Bengali nationalist leader and social reformer Gopāla Kṛṣṇa Gokhale was gladly latched onto by Bengalis.

* Ultadingi is now known as Ultadanga.

† Other Bhaktivinoda Āsanas not otherwise mentioned in this book were established at Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja, at the Yogapīṭha, and at Puruliyā, a village within Jessore District.

* Although in the West begging is generally considered reprehensible, soliciting of alms by monks is still widespread in traditional Asian cultures, wherein pious householders feel blessed to have an opportunity to make an offering to renunciants.

* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura later awarded *sannyāsa* to Gaura Govinda Vidyābhūṣaṇa, with the name Bhakti Vilāsa Gabhastinemi.

* As stated in the *Harmonist* (30.30): "The Oriya people have been devotedly attached to the teachings of Mahāprabhu ever since His residence in their midst under the garb of a sannyasi. There is thus the greatest chance for the general acceptance of the true teachings of the Supreme Lord in the sacred land of Śrī Śrī Jagannātha-deva."

* Certain deviant groups originating in Bengal, such as *kartābhajās* and Caraṇa dāsa Bābājī and his followers, were also grassroots preachers. But none had the scope or vision of the Gauḍīya Maṭha. *Kartābhajās* were aggressive proselytizers, but their appeal was limited to certain lower classes in some areas of Bengal. Caraṇa dāsa Bābājī's approach was non-aggressive, but his following never expanded beyond the traditional Gauḍīya areas of Bengal, Orissa, and Vraja-*maṇḍala*.

* *Keśarī*—lion. In ISKCON, "lion guru" is rendered *siṁha*-guru, which apparently is an erroneous conjecture as to the original Sanskrit/Bengali. Although it is not incorrect to refer to Śrīla

Sarasvatī Ṭhākura as *siṁha*-guru, it being synonymous with *ācārya-keśarī,* this term is not used in the Gauḍīya Maṭha, wherein reference to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura as a lionlike guru is infrequent and is mostly rendered *ācārya-keśarī.*

Chittaranjan Dāsa, endearingly called Deśabandhu (Friend of the country) was a prominent and wealthy advocate of Calcutta and a hawkish leader of the Indian independence movement. He died in 1925.

† It appears that due to opposition Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had previously been unable to hold this function at Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja.

* *Mañjuṣā*—casket. For more details of this discussion about *Vaiṣṇava-mañjuṣā,* see vol. 1, pp. 332–33.

* *Samāhṛti*—collecting. *Vaiṣṇava-mañjuṣā-samāhṛti* consisted of materials collected for later developing, organizing, and compiling *Vaiṣṇava-mañjuṣā.*

† *Vaiṣṇava-mañjuṣā* was never completed. Yet much of *Vaiṣṇava-mañjuṣā-samāhṛti* was incorporated into *Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Abhidhāna,* an encyclopedic dictionary published in 1957 by Haridāsa dāsa, a scholar of Navadvīpa whose important services to the Gauḍīya world also included salvaging and printing several hitherto unpublished manuscripts of the Gosvāmī literature. In his youth Haridāsa dāsa had attended some of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's lectures, and he always offered unstinted verbal praise of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. Yet curiously, in *Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava abhidhāna* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī is only cursorily mentioned, whereas some *prākṛta-sahajiyās* are highly praised.

* Buriganga is the river in Dacca.

* For more on the construction of the new temple, see vol. 1, p. 369.

* These mantras are given in vol. 1, p. xv.

* Thus named in commemoration of Caitanya Mahāprabhu's having instructed Śrī Sanātana there, as described in Cc 2.20–24.

* Svāmī Giri—Śrīmad Bhakti Sarvasva Giri Mahārāja, a Gauḍīya Maṭha sannyasi.

* Śravaṇa-sadana—"house of hearing."

† The present temple of the Chennai Gauḍīya Maṭha was completed and inaugurated in 1937, after the passing of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

‡ Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī was a *gṛhastha* devotee who had left home to serve as a fulltime preacher.

§ For more on Jagabandhu Prabhu and the temple construction, see vol. 2, pp. 366–71.

* "Apparently absorbed in material affairs" refers to the Gauḍīya Maṭha devotees' seeming penchant for money and the trappings of fine living, such as lavish buildings and motor cars. But this verse indicates that Gauḍīya Maṭha members were not infatuated with the grandeur either of this world or even of Vaikuṇṭha, being internally absorbed in worship on the spontaneous path (*rāga-patha*).

An alternative translation is: "Hari's own people reveled in satisfying the transcendental senses of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, worshiping in awe the path of spontaneous love."

† "Another's house" refers to the rented property they had vacated.

* Dr. Sena was the author of several books that are still highly regarded in academic circles, especially *History of Bengali Language and Literature.* Among his other works are *The Vaiṣṇava Literature of Mediaeval Bengal; Chaitanya and His Companions;* and *Chaitanya and His Age.*

* Some years afterward, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura revealed that this Jagannātha later advented as Vaiṣṇava Sārvabhauma Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī. (Reported in the *Nadia Prakash,* 27 January 1938)

* See vol. 1, pp. 237–44.

* His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda remarked, "*Khāvā dāvā dokāna,* [a shop for eating and drinking], my guru-*mahārāja* used to say—'Beg some rice, cook it, and eat and sleep.'" (Conversation, 2 July 1976)

† In other words, collection of funds was not meant merely for eating.

* The "six enemies," often mentioned in Vedic writings, generally refers to lust, anger, greed, illusion, pride, and envy, but may also be understood as the mind and five senses.

* This sentence was originally written in English exactly as replicated here.

† Presented as "'Big I' Versus 'Good I'" in the *Harmonist* (8.241–46).

* Living source—See vol. 1, p. 327.

* A vision that was never fulfilled.

* His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda wrote: "In the latter days of my guru-*mahārāja* he was very disgusted. Actually he left this world earlier, otherwise he would have continued to live for more years." (Letter, 28 April 1974)

Nevertheless, such statements may be compared with many positive utterances that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī made about his disciples, as found throughout this book.

The disgust of a guru toward his disciples should be understood as a manifestation of his transcendental concern for them, not necessarily as outright rejection.

* For the apologue of the wise old monkey, see vol. 3, pp. 151–52.

† Named after Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja, in Godruma.

* As stated in *Three Apostles of the Gaudiya Vaishnava Movement* and also by Jati Śekhara Prabhu, in Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's last days, upset at the misbehavior of certain disciples, he feigned a heart attack and went to Rādhā-kuṇḍa, then returned to Calcutta. No more details of this curious-sounding incident are available.

* This talk is featured in vol. 3, pp. 67–72.

* Here *āśraya-vigraha* can be understood as either the guru (Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī himself) or Śrī Rādhā.

† In whilom times, sacrifice was performed by offering aged oxen. The analogy is of offering bodies in the sacrifice of chanting the Lord's holy names.

* "Seven-tongued flame" refers to the seven characteristics of *śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana,* as described in the first verse of *Śikṣāṣṭaka* and explained by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in his *Sanmodana-bhāṣya* commentary. The seven tongues are:

ceto-darpaṇa-mārjana—cleansing the mirror of the heart;

bhava-mahā-dāvāgni-nirvāpaṇa—extinguishing the blazing forest fire of material existence;

śreyaḥ-kairava-candrikā-vitaraṇa—one receives the benediction of pure devotional service, compared to moonshine spreading the white lily of good fortune;

vidyā-vadhū-jīvana—the life and soul of all knowledge; the devotee receives the benediction of knowledge of his eternal identity;

ānandāmbudhi-vardhana—expanding the blissful ocean of transcendental life;

pūrṇāmṛtāsvādana—tasting full nectar at every step;

sarvātma-snapana—the self is wholly cleansed of all desires other than for selfless devotional service.

See also "seven-tongued flame" (vol. 1, p. 370).

* In other words, he was interested not in a disciple's melodious voice, but in his devotion.

* This statement apparently alludes to Śrīmad Bhāratī Mahārāja's having separated himself from his guru and godbrothers. Moreover, considering the impending rupture of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, those words seem to have been prophetic.

* As stated in the *Gauḍīya* in the announcement of his departure: "The meaning of entering the *līlā* at this hour is clearly understood by those intimate with him, for it is directly experienced in their hearts, and only a hint can be given here. At the end of the night, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are locked in a tight embrace, *gāḍhāliṅgana-nirbhedam āptau:* 'Their firm embrace is broken.' (*Sanat-kumāra-saṁhitā* 198) Jayadeva Gosvāmī indicated this situation by the word *naktam* (night) in the first verse of his *Gīta-govinda,* which begins *meghair meduram ambaram,* 'thick clouds in the sky.' When Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa unite in this way, they assume Their combined form of Gaurasundara."

* See vol. 2, p. 395, fn *.

† *Homa*—fire sacrifice. Vaiṣṇava *homa,* as described in *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā,* consists of oblations offered to Lord Viṣṇu and many principal Vaiṣṇavas.

* Concerned for his guru's health, Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu would try to restrain him from prolonged speaking.

† Yet when on tour, he sometimes visited notable secular sites—for instance, in Ajmer. (See vol. 1, p. 233)

* Customarily, upon coming into the presence of a senior, young boys would touch his feet.

* Based on a statement in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.1.2), this pronouncement is from a poem by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, given as a summarizing comment in an edition of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *Jaiva Dharma* that he published. Much of *Jaiva Dharma* is given to comparing various religious paths to *śuddha-bhakti.*

† *Vedyaṁ vāstavam atra vastu śivadam:* "This *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* propounds the highest truth: reality distinguished from illusion, for the welfare of all." (SB 1.1.2) For the full verse, see vol. 3, pp. 76–77.

* Hindi.

† Hence the title of the *Harmonist* magazine. (See vol. 1, p. 304)

* Since bull dung lacks the purifying quality of cow dung, only a fool would use it as a purifier in lieu of cow dung.

* See Glossary: Enchantress.

† See also the paragraph beginning “In Satya-yuga, Hiraṇyakaśipu” (vol. 3, p. 37).

* Śrīpāda Madhvācārya similarly stated in his gloss on *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad* that failure to speak against propagators of untruth causes one to enter an even darker existence than the perpetrators are destined for.

* The well-known phrase *vasudhaiva-kuṭumbakam,* “seeing the whole world as one's family,” is from *Hitopadeśa:*

> *ayaṁ nijaḥ paro vetti gaṇanā laghu-cetasām*
> *udāra-caritānāṁ tu vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam*
>
> “Narrow-minded persons calculate in terms of ‘this is mine, that is another's,’ but those of noble character see everyone in the world as their kin.”

* *Harāv abhaktasya kuto mahad-guṇāḥ:* “A nondevotee has no good qualities.” (SB 5.18.12)

* The Madras Gauḍīya Maṭha was near Gopalapuram, a posh area.

* For further discussion of possible tactical reasons for Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's acceptance of *sannyāsa* and founding of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, see vol. 2, p. 203.

* *Rājasika*—characterized by and suitable for persons in *rajo-guṇa,* the mode of passion.

* For further scriptural references upholding Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsa,* see *Gauḍīya Kaṇṭhahāra* 15.29–40.

† The traditional brick-red of *sannyāsa* is derived from *geru,* a soft stone that partially dissolves in water and is thus used as a dye.

* For Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's comments on the pitfalls of premature renunciation, see “The Perils of Bābājī Life” (vol. 3, pp. 149–50).

* *Sevā-dāsī*—a maidservant. In Gauḍīya usage this term refers to the attendants of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and thus was grossly misused in connection with mistresses of *bābājīs.*

† *Boṣṭam*—corruption of the word *Vaiṣṇava.*

‡ Māyāvādīs are *nirviśeṣa-vādīs,* for they insist that the absolute truth is *nirviśeṣa* (without qualifying attributes). *Nirviśeṣa* also means “nondiscriminatory.”

* For instance, upon accepting *sannyāsa, ekadaṇḍis* renounce their *śikhā* and *sūtra* whereas *tridaṇḍis* retain them as symbols of service to Viṣṇu.

† See also the opening paragraphs to the section "Sannyasis" (vol. 2, pp. 289–90).

* *Dṛg* (*dṛś*) may be translated into English as "vision," "seeing," "the eye," "knowing," "discerning," and thus comprises multiple nuances apropos the nature of seeing and the seer; *dṛśya* means "object of vision." *Dṛg-dṛśya-vicāra* is the subject of "Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda o Dṛg-dṛśya-vicāra" (*Gauḍīya* 16.24.403–6), which this section, "The Seer and the Seen," is based on (and wherefrom all passages cited herein have been excerpted, unless otherwise indicated). In that essay, published after the demise of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and the beginning of open factionalism in the Mission, Sundarānanda Prabhu quotes Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura as having said that only Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu understood this *dṛg-dṛśya-vicāra*. I have deliberately altered that citation.

* The obscure term *tripūṭi-vināśa* is taken from certain writings of the Śrī *sampradāya*.

* *Mīyate*—is measured; *anayā*—by which; *iti*—thus.

† *Veṇu*—flute. Kṛṣṇa's celebrated flute is intimately connected with His Vṛndāvana pastimes.

* Sudarśana is also the name of Lord Viṣṇu's discus weapon.

† *Kāma-gāyatrī* includes the term *puṣpa-bāṇa* (flower-arrow).

‡ This narration is transcribed from a recorded talk by B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja. A discrepancy is that *kāma-gāyatrī* does not describe throwing flowers on Kṛṣṇa, but that Kṛṣṇa has flower-arrows. This apparent inaccuracy may be due to faulty transcription of the narration, or misunderstanding of *kāma-gāyatrī* by the new initiates—or perhaps even with correct understanding they were anyway discussing the possibility of throwing flowers on Kṛṣṇa. Whatever the case, this anecdote contrasts the excitement and anticipation of the new initiates with the apparent disappointment and despondency of their initiator, whose feeling hopelessness for attaining Kṛṣṇa demonstrates the inner wealth of substantial Vaiṣṇavas.

* Extracts from that lecture are featured earlier in this section on *dṛg-dṛśya-vicāra*.

* For similar remarks re seeing Śrīla Bhaktivinoda, see the talk between Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and Nafar Babu (vol. 2, p. 219).

† *Sādhu sāvadhāna*—"O sadhus, be careful!" The song referred to begins *śarīra avidyā-jāla*.

* See also Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's comments on pseudo-humility in the section "Compassionate Belligerence and Genuine Humility" (vol. 2, pp. 220–27).

* See also Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's explication of Bg. 9.30–31 (vol. 2, p. 215).

* The Gauḍīya position is as stated by Lord Caitanya Himself (see Cc 2.6.135). The Teṅkalai

branch of Śrī Vaiṣṇavas accepts the Tamil *Divya Prabandha* as equal to but not more authoritative than *śruti.*

† This is a simplified and thus not a universally accurate presentation of a complex topic. For example, not only are the relative merits of *śruti* and *smṛti* disputed among certain scholars, but also that which constitutes them. For instance, opinions vary as to whether *Bhagavad-gītā,* the *āraṇyaka* and *brāhmaṇa* portions of the Vedas, and other texts are *śruti* or *smṛti.*

* See other comments about this (vol. 1, p. 198, and vol. 2, p. 229).

* Both the Vedas and the *Purāṇas* are eternal, but in terms of cosmic time the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is yet older than the Vedas, because the *catuḥ-ślokī Bhāgavatam* (*Bhāgavatam's* four essential verses, 2.9.33–36) were revealed even before the creation.

As stated in the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa, purāṇāni tadārthāni:* "The *Purāṇas* give the meaning of the Vedas."

† "Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,

And fools who came to scoff remained to pray."

(From *The Deserted Village,* by Oliver Goldsmith [1728–74], Anglo-Irish author, poet, and playwright.)

* *Parokṣa-vādā ṛṣayaḥ parokṣaṁ mama ca priyam:* "The Vedic seers and mantras deal in esoteric terms, and I also am pleased by such confidential descriptions." (SB 11.21.35)

† From *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.1.4–5. For the full quote, see vol. 1, p. 403, fn *.

‡ This commentary was never published, and the manuscript is untraceable.

* For an overview of the relationship between Vaiṣṇavism and Vedic literature, see: Satsvarūpa dāsa Gosvāmī, "Vedic Literature—Siddhānta and History," chap. 4 of *Readings in Vedic Literature* (Los Angeles: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1990).

* The following is from "Nitya-dharma o Saṁsāra," chap. 7 of *Jaiva Dharma:*

Yādava dāsa: "What may one call those who [after accepting *bhek*] live in the manner of *gṛhasthas* within an *ākhḍā*?"

Ananta dāsa Bābājī: "They may be called *vāntāśīs* (those who eat their own vomit). They are eating what they have regurgitated."

Yādava dāsa: "Is such a person no longer a Vaiṣṇava?"

Ananta dāsa Bābājī: “Since his actions are contrary to scriptural injunctions and to Vaiṣṇava dharma, why should we associate with him? He has deviated from the path of *śuddha-bhakti* and adopted deceit and caprice. What Vaiṣṇava qualities remain in him?”

* Herein *sanātana* may be understood either as “eternal” or “pertaining to Sanātana Gosvāmī.” Hence, this *maṭha* was founded to practice and preach Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism in general, and in particular, according to Sanātana-*śikṣā,* Caitanya Mahāprabhu's seminal instructions to Sanātana Gosvāmī imparted in Banaras.

* This version of the verse is almost universally quoted, both orally and in print, by all Gauḍīyas. However, the standard version that appears in printed copies of *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* is: *pṛthivīte paryanta āche yata deśa-grāma/ sarvatra sañcāra haibeka mora nāma.* There is no essential difference in meaning between these two versions.

* See “Is Gauḍīya Maṭha the Only Way?” (vol. 3, pp. 49–52).

* See vol. 1, p. 372.

* The logo was featured on the cover of every *Gauḍīya,* starting from the 7 February 1931 edition, and was probably designed just prior to this.

* A bell and ghee lamp are standard paraphernalia in *arcana.*

† Hindu purists would eschew anything not indigenously Indian.

* For Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's comment on the early-morning chanting of *bhaja re... ati manda,* see vol. 1, p. 249.

* Such considerations were based on astrological determinants.

† *Babu* may mean simply “a respected person,” but in this usage it denotes a well-to-do householder fond of opulent attire and provender.

* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura explained that the *cit-śarīra* (spiritual body) must be nourished by *cid-rakta* (spiritual blood), which he defined as the endeavor to go on speaking Hari-*kathā* despite being misunderstood, neglected, or opposed by others.

* Standard usage of *gṛhamedhī* indicates a pious *gṛhastha.* Yet in his commentary to SB 2.1.2, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura states that *medhī* is derived from *medh* (violence).

* That Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was not opposed to *nirjana-bhajana* per se, but to that of inconsummate devotees, is clear from the last line of “Vaiṣṇava Ke?”

* Ville Parle is now part of the Mumbai metropolis.

* Accordingly, the Maṭha at Bāg-bazar was often referred to by insiders as *vāṇī-haṭṭa.* Both *Bazar* and *haṭṭa* mean "market." *Bazar* generally indicates a daily or almost daily urban market, comprised mostly of professional vendors and often with permanent structures. *Haṭṭa* means a weekly or twice-weekly market at which villagers of the surrounding area display, on a cloth or mat spread on the earth, their produce and other goods for trade.

* Sajjana "Mahārāja" was actually a *brahmacārī.*

† Mallikārjuna-tīrtha, also known as Śrī Śailam, is situated in the present state of Andhra Pradesh.

* Choti and Mangalpur have since been separated into two villages.

† In Orissa, when Jagannātha is worshiped alone, without Subhadrā or Balabhadra, He is known as Dadhi Bāmana or Patita Pāvana.

‡ Yet even after taking *sannyāsa,* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura entered Bhakti Bhavan, his father's house in Calcutta. The Gauḍīya scholar Dr. Fakir Mohan dāsa has opined that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura refrained from doing so in Chotimangalpur because it, being ancestral landed property, was "home" in a way that the newly constructed city dwelling could never be. Another consideration is that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had built Bhakti Bhavan specifically for serving Hari and Vaiṣṇavas, and thus it was not a mundane family home but an appropriate place for a Vaiṣṇava sannyasi to frequent.

* *Kṣīra—(in this context)* condensed milk.

† *Yātrā*—professional drama performances of Kṛṣṇa-*līlā* and Caitanya-*līlā,* popular among common people in Bengal and Orissa. Unfortunately, these are cheap presentations meant largely for demotic entertainment, and the character of the actors is nothing akin to the great personalities portrayed. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura used to speak of *yātrā-dalera nārada*—stage Nārada, or farcical Nārada.

* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda's elaborate comparison of cleaning the Guṇḍicā temple to a devotee's meticulous efforts to rid his heart of even the slightest trace of material desires, to make it suitable for inviting Kṛṣṇa, is most instructive for all aspiring devotees. It is recorded in his *Anubhāṣya* commentary on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and rendered in English by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda in the BBT edition of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (2.12.135, purport).

† Multan, Rawalpindi, Takṣaśilā, and Lahore are now in Pakistan.

‡ In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (12.2.18) it is predicted that at the end of Kali-yuga, Kalki will appear in Śambhala—the popular equating of which to the present town of Sambhal was accepted by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

* Vṛndāvana being the principal center of Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti,* many devotionally inclined people had domiciled there. Most were Bengalis, including many retired gentlemen, but there were also younger men who had renounced their families, and widows.

* Several more such *pāda-pīṭhas* have since been established by discipular descendants of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

† The prototype Vaitaraṇī is described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.26.22) as a moat surrounding hell—full of stool, urine, pus, blood, hair, nails, bones, marrow, flesh, fat, and also ferocious aquatics that repeatedly devour sinful persons cast therein. *Caitanya-bhāgavata* (3.2.282–83) states: "All sins flee of their own accord from those who simply see the Vaitaraṇī that flows through Jajpur; even an animal who crosses this river is beheld by the demigods to attain a four-handed [Vaikuṇṭha] form." Worldly persons come to Jajpur to perform rituals whereby they can be freed from sinful reactions that could cause their incarceration in the hellish Vaitaraṇī.

* Viṣṇukāñcī—a neighborhood within the temple town Conjeevaram.

* The connection between Kanyākumārī and the unmarried *gopīs* (Vraja-*kumārīs*) is that the latter prayed to Kātyāyanī, who is nondifferent from Kanyākumārī, to attain Kṛṣṇa as their spouse. (See verse quoted in vol. 1, p. 236)

Re Ālālanātha being *dvi-guṇita vipralambha-kṣetra,* see vol. 1, p. 398.

* Pārtha-sārathi—a name of Kṛṣṇa meaning "charioteer of Arjuna."

† *Veṣṭi*—a dhoti worn double-folded and without a *kaccha* (the length tucked in at the back).

* Pātrarāja—president.

* See also the two successive paragraphs in vol. 2, pp. 159–60, the first beginning *Bahubhir militvā.*

* For the *kīrtana* liturgy, see vol. 1, pp. 211–12.

* Similarly, he maintained that devotional dances should not be enacted onstage, but performed only in temples, before and for the pleasure of the deity of Kṛṣṇa.

† Bhuvana-mohinī—an epithet for Durgā. A parallel description of Bhuvana-mohana-manomohinī is given in Cc 1.4.95.

‡ These two songs instruct aspiring devotees about the importance of controlling one's mind, and of sincerity, heartfelt prayer, and humility.

* These are the first words of a *kīrtana,* to be sung shortly before dawn, by the famous Vaiṣṇava lyricist Vidyāpati, which describes parrots calling Rādhā to awaken.

† This style of singing the *mahā-mantra,* in which the holy names often become practically unrecognizable, is common among Bengali *kīrtanīyās*.

‡ *Tāla-ṭokā*—slapping the hand on the opposite arm, as in keeping time in music. (*Tāla* —musical beat; *ṭokā*—slapping)

* This statement was based on the understanding that the pastimes of Lord Caitanya in Navadvīpa and Purī are eternally manifest, although only to sufficiently advanced and fortunate devotees, as per Cb 2.23.513:

> *adyāpiha caitanya ei saba līlā kare*
> *yāṅ'ra bhāgye thāke, se dekhaye nirantare*
>
> Even now Lord Caitanya performs all these pastimes. Persons who are fortunate see them constantly.

‡ Madhupur (or Madhapur) is in the hilly area of Orissa that flanks the border of West Bengal.

* *Tulasī-mañca*—a pillar generally three to four feet high upon which a potted *tulasī* plant is placed. These are common throughout India.

† This statement by Lord Caitanya is recorded in Cb 3.9.121–22. Yet it appears to be contextual, because when on tour, He regularly honored *prasāda* in homes of Vaiṣṇavas of various *sampradāyas* whose prescribed *sādhanas* did not include extensive *nāma-japa.*

* *Prajalpa—(in this context)* idle talk.

* Although others disagreed, certain of his disciples insisted that even after assuming the responsibility of a preacher, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura continued to chant at least sixty-four rounds. Kṛṣṇa Keśava Prabhu, who had considerable personal association with him during the latter years, averred that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura used to chant two lakh names daily, and would reduce to one lakh only on very busy occasions such as Janmāṣṭamī and other festivals, when throughout the day he would speak Hari-*kathā* to visitors. Considering all the other activities that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura performed, it may be deemed unlikely that he also chanted so much. But as previously described (vol. 1, pp. 39–40), even while daily chanting three lakh or more names during his vow to chant a billion names, he also undertook many other services.

* For more about these courses, see vol. 1, p. 405.

† *Daśa*—ten. For these ten points, see vol. 1, pp. 286–87. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's teachings re *daśamūla* were mostly featured in his essays in *Sajjana-toṣaṇī,* and also in his *Jaiva Dharma* and *Śrī Gaurāṅga-līlā-smaraṇa-maṅgala-stotra.* After the disappearance of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura they were systematically organized and published by Śrīmad Bhakti Śrīrūpa Bhāgavata Mahārāja (q.v.—vol. 2, p. 404) in the book *Daśamūla-tattva.*

* See *gopīdhana-kathāra kīrtana* (vol. 1, p. 462).

* *Harer nāmaiva kevalam*—"The holy name is the only way." For the full verse, see vol. 2, p. 153.

* Ayodhyā, Mathurā, Māyāpur (in this context, conventionally understood to be Haridvāra), Kāśī, Kāñcī (Conjeevaram), Avantī (Ujjain), and Dvārakā.

* This statement parallels and encapsulates thoughts from Europe's classic philosophic tradition going back to Socrates, which is most clearly articulated in the works of St. Ambrose and St. Augustine, and later by St. Thomas Aquinas. It is also outlined in previous Indian theological treatises.

† This topic is further discussed in the section "On Rāgānugā-bhakti" (vol. 2, pp. 164–79).

* See vol. 1, p. 465.

† See vol. 1, p. 400.

‡ See vol. 3, p. 37.

* See vol. 1, p. 113.

† See vol. 1, p. 338.

‡ See vol. 1, p. 421.

§ For two of the most commonly quoted envoys, see vol. 1, p. 289.

* S*evonmukhe hi jihvādau*—from a *śloka* stating that Kṛṣṇa imparts knowledge of Himself to those eager to serve Him. For the full verse, see vol. 1, p. 283.

* Internal devotees—See Cc 1.7.18–19, commentary.

* Certain *prākṛta-sahajiyās* considered it nondevotional to read anything but *rasa-śāstras.*

* SB 10.22.35. The previous verse, analogical to Rāmadāsa Prabhu's service, states: "These trees fulfil one's desires with their leaves, flowers, and fruits, their shade, roots, bark, and wood, and also their fragrance, sap, ashes, pulp, and shoots."

Being similar, this and the previous anecdote about an unschooled *brahmacārī* disciple who worked in the garden could be different renditions of the same incident. The former is from Jati Śekhara Prabhu, the latter by Śrīmad Bhakti Pramoda Purī Mahārāja.

* In *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (*3.10.33–34) it is described that Lord Caitanya delighted in

hearing the narrations of Dhruva Mahārāja and Prahlāda Mahārāja and requested Gadādhara Paṇḍita to repeat these stories hundreds of times.

* This statement sarcastically echoes the *sahajiyā* claim that devotees interested in philosophy are not genuine.

* Among academic and devotional scholars alike, *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* is universally accepted as preeminent among the hagiographies of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. In a letter replying to a query regarding technical differences in the descriptions of Caitanya Mahāprabhu's pastimes as rendered in these books, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura verified that *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* is to be considered most authoritative both in historical description and philosophical exposition.

* For instance, see vol. 2, p. 174.

† See also his comment on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (vol. 2, p. 192).

* *Rājasika, tāmasika*—characterized by and suitable for persons in *rajo-* and *tamo-guṇa* respectively.

* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's lecturing on qualifications to read *Gīta-govinda* is described in vol. 2, p. 178.

† Why this is so is further explained in Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's commentary on Cc 3.20.28 (quoted in vol. 2, pp. 98–99).

‡ For Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's high rating of *Sarasvatī-jayaśrī,* see vol. 1, p. xxix.

* For the full *śloka,* see vol. 2, p. 220.

†

> *prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ*
> *ahaṅkāra-vimūḍhātmā kartāham iti manyate*
>
> The spirit soul bewildered by the influence of false ego thinks himself the doer of activities that are actually carried out by the three modes of material nature.

Sarva-dharmān parityajya—For the full *śloka,* see vol. 1, p. 179.

‡ *Kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ*—For the full *śloka,* see vol. 2, p. 220.

* This verse is quoted in full in vol. 3, pp. 49, 86.

† Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has also rendered *janān gaura-candraḥ svayaṁ saḥ* as *harau*

gaura-candraṁ bhaje tam.

* See also “Bengalis were too absorbed...” (vol. 2, p. 48).

* For this contribution alone, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura warrants greater attention by scholars of religion, who generally consider him a relatively minor player in the kaleidoscope of Indian religious history.

† *Tat*—that (Absolute Truth); *vanam—(in this context only)* worshipable; *iti*—thus; *upāsitavyam*—worshipable.

* See vol. 1, p. 229, fn *.

† Non-acceptance of the name Bhāratī—See Cc 1.3.34, commentary.

Breaking of the Lord's *daṇḍa*—See Cc 2.5.142–43, commentary.

The common misunderstanding is that Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja became immoral by telling a lie and thus lost the benediction that his chariot would move just above the surface of the earth. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī revealed that the actual cause was Yudhiṣṭhira's having hesitated to follow Kṛṣṇa's order to speak a lie.

The story of Ekalavya appears in *Mahābhārata, Ādi-parva,* chap. 123. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's elucidation of it appears in *Upākhyāne Upadeśa* 2.29–32.

Additional (apparently original) insights offered by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and mentioned in this book are: re the *bṛhad-mṛdaṅga* (vol. 1, p. 293); prayers of impersonalists (vol. 2, p. 141); *ahaṅgrahopāsanā* (vol. 2, p. 143); *pūjala rāga-patha* (reverence for, rather than imitation of, *rāgātmika-bhaktas*—vol. 2, p. 173); outside and inside (vol. 2, p. 220); *saralatā* (vol. 2, p. 223); the worship of Kṛṣṇa alone leads to impersonalism (vol. 2, p. 258); indications that even the seemingly worldly activities of the preaching movement are service to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī (“intimate words”—vol. 2, p. 376); Lord Caitanya's *mano-'bhīṣṭa* (vol. 2, p. 419, fn *). See also “Neologisms” (vol. 1, pp. 325–31).

For more of his theological contributions, see “Aṣṭottara-śata Śrī” (vol. 3, pp. 1–12), the list of some exceptional statements (vol. 1, pp. 266–67), and his comments on fish-eating in Purī (vol. 2, pp. 92–93).

* For expanded definitions of *kīrtana,* see vol. 1, p. 247.

† *Bṛhat*—large.

‡ See paragraph beginning “We do not belittle” (vol. 3, p. 113).

* This anecdote is one of several that have been recounted in different ways.

* By the divine grace of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* in bona fide form is again available. His later edition of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* did not require such critical analysis, for in its more than two thousand editions, internal textual consistency has been maintained.

* The number of verses for which *vivṛti* was supplied is as follows: First Canto, 10; Second Canto, 16; Third Canto, 23; Fourth Canto, 30; Eleventh Canto, 790; Twelth Canto, 48. For other cantos *vivṛti* was not supplied.

* To generate income, commercial jobs were accepted from outside sources.

† For a list of some of those works, see vol. 3, pp. 218–20. After Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's *tirobhāva,* several of these were published by various of his disciples.

Sarva-saṁvādinī—Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary on his own *Ṣaṭ-sandarbha.*

‡ This contrasts with the preaching strategy of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who wanted beautiful pictures on the covers of his books.

* This anecdote is described in vol. 2, p. 78.

† *Prakash* (*prakāśa*)—illumination, light; a publication.

* In 1880, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had briefly published a Bengali magazine called the *Paramārthī.*

† Why this was so is explained in a quote from the *Harmonist* (vol. 2, pp. 206–7).

* In this sentence the intended meaning of *unapproachable* is presumably "irreproachable."

* Long into the future, many of these articles will remain invaluable for addressing recirculated arguments against pure Gauḍīya *siddhānta.*

* Although several articles hint of internal controversy, this selective taciturnity is probably why several major incidents (still widely circulated orally within the Gauḍīya Maṭha) were not committed to writing at that time—for instance, the threat to destroy a Theistic Exhibition (see vol. 2, p. 76), and temple gates being closed on his party in Vṛndāvana (see vol. 1, p. 385).

† Although *Gauḍīya* 13.340 (5 January 1935) stated that this edition of *Indian Historical Quarterly* was vol. 10, no. 2, and dated it as June 1834, that is clearly incorrect.

* As stated by Ravīndra Svarūpa dāsa (William Deadwyler III) in *ISKCON Communications Journal,* 4.1 (January–June 1996): "S.K. De's 'seminal' book, *Early History of the Vaishnava Faith and Movement in Bengal,* which is probably the most comprehensive early history of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism in Bengal, at least in the English language, is full of forced conclusions.

Yet it remains the standard work on the subject, at least for scholars. De seems to bend over backwards to ape the manners of Western critical scholarship, and he tries to doubt everything conceivably doubtable. There's almost a presumption of falsification in the documents—guilty until proven innocent. He questions the historicity of *everything.*"

* His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda wrote: "From the *brahmacārī-āśrama* one may accept the *sannyāsa-āśrama, vānaprastha-āśrama,* or *gṛhastha-āśrama.* It is not compulsory for a *brahmacārī* to become a *gṛhastha.* Because the ultimate aim is to understand the Absolute Truth, there is no necessity of going through all the different *āśramas.* Thus one may proceed to the *sannyāsa-āśrama* directly from the *brahmacārī-āśrama.* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura accepted the *sannyāsa-āśrama* directly from the *brahmacārī-āśrama.* In other words His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura did not think it compulsory to accept the *gṛhastha-āśrama* or *vānaprastha-āśrama.*" (SB 7.12.15, purport)

† Eugenics (which derived from Darwinian theory and in the early twentieth century was widely considered a respectable science) influenced several countries—including the United States, Canada, Australia, and at least eight in Europe—to implement laws meant to improve their national stock by techniques such as forced sterilization and racial segregation. Eugenics lost credibility after the Nazi Holocaust, which was directly based on eugenics.

* Only a small fraction of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's transposed Hari-*kathā,* mostly whatever was published during or just after his manifest pastimes, is presently extant; the rest seems to be irretrievably lost. According to some, much was deliberately destroyed by Sundarānanda Prabhu and other disciples who developed doubts about Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura after his departure. Śrīmad Bhakti Pramoda Purī Mahārāja, formerly Praṇavānanda Prabhu, stated that if all of it had been preserved, it would have been more voluminous than *Mahābhārata.*

† In a lecture (6 June 1969), His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda said, "When my guru-*mahārāja* was selecting articles to be published in the *Harmonist,* if he simply saw that the writer has several times written Kṛṣṇa, Lord Caitanya, like that, he would pass it immediately: 'It's alright. So many times he has uttered Kṛṣṇa and Caitanya, so it is alright.'" Yet this seems not to have been the general norm, for Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was exacting about philosophical accuracy, deviations from which could certainly exist even if the names of Kṛṣṇa and Lord Caitanya are often quoted, as was common in *apa-sampradāya* literature.

* Although this explanation is consistent with the Bengali spelling of Bāg-bazar, the *Harmonist* of that time would regularly render it as Baghbazar. Up to the present, both usages are current in English rendition.

† *Prahlāda-caritra* is no longer extant.

‡ This autobiography is quoted in *Sarasvatī-jayaśrī,* 23. Also, in "Śrī Śrīla Prabhupādera Ādi,

Madhya o Antya-līlāra Carama Upadeśa" (an article published after Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's departure and featured in *Śrīla Prabhupāder Goloka-vāṇī,* 1.71–81), Śrī Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda cited this autobiography in regard to incidents in Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's pre-*sannyāsa* years. The quote in vol. 1, p. 19, re Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's quitting Sanskrit College, is also stated to be from his autobiography. Yet no further information about that work has been found, and it seems to be irrecoverably lost.

* Like the English word *hard,* the Sanskrit/Bengali word *kaṭhora* can mean either "harsh" or "difficult to comprehend." Everything about Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura is soft and sweet yet is felt to be harsh and hard by persons of perverted perception.

* *Bhāgavatīya-bhāṣā* resembled Maṇi-pravāla, a combination of high Tamil and Sanskrit deliberately developed within the Śrī *sampradāya.*

* *Kānta*—a lover or husband.

† Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's linguistic innovativeness and ability to derive unique meanings from words was in keeping with a broader tradition at the heart of Vedic philosophy and culture. In Vedic epistemology most schools accept *śabda* (the sounds or words that constitute the Vedas) to be axiomatically and intrinsically divine and hence authoritative. Comprehensive understanding of sound and language (specifically the innumerable nuances of Sanskrit) being thus pivotal in Vedic hermeneutics, Sanskrit *paṇḍitas* have over the centuries contributed some of the most sophisticated speculations and realizations about language and meaning known to man. Furthermore, due to the complexity of Sanskrit and because multiple interpretations can be derived from word analysis, Sanskrit scholarship has traditionally been rich in punning and other kinds of wordplays, which Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura also was adept at.

‡ Possibly Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was the first to define and deploy these terms in this manner. The definitions given herein are derived from his *The Bhagavat: Its Philosophy, Its Ethics, and Its Theology* and incorporate further angles given by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his followers.

* In comparison to other ages, when spiritual strength was obtained generally by solitary personal effort, in Kali-yuga only *saṅkīrtana* (group effort to glorify the Lord) is recommended.

† Oriya and Bengali are closely related languages, and generally if a person is fluent in one he can considerably understand the other. Being from a Bengali family but born and raised in Orissa, Jati Śekhara was proficient in both.

* Instances of his employing mathematical examples appear in vol. 1, pp. 189–90, and vol. 3, pp. 50 and 64.

† That Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was not speaking any terrestrial language is understood from the analysis of *ajña-rūḍhi* and *vidvad-rūḍhi* (see vol. 1, p. 331). Although his words paralleled

those of mundane languages, the meanings he imparted through them were of the spiritual stratum.

‡ *Mleccha-bhāṣā*—any language other than, but particularly any far removed from, Sanskrit; uncultured language. *Mleccha* also refers to persons ignorant of Sanskrit, who in ancient times were considered barbaric; thus *mleccha-bhāṣā* also means a language of uncultured barbarians.

* N.B. Bg 6.30:

> *yo māṁ paśyati sarvatra sarvaṁ ca mayi paśyati*
> *tasyāhaṁ na praṇaśyāmi sa ca me na praṇaśyati*
>
> "For one who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, I am never lost, nor is he ever lost to Me."

* *Daridra*—poor, destitute.

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda wrote: "Unscrupulous men sometimes address a poor man as *daridra-nārāyaṇa,* or 'poor Nārāyaṇa.' This is most unscientific. Lord Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī are always situated in everyone's heart, but this does not mean that everyone is Nārāyaṇa, especially not those in poverty. This is a most abominable term to use in connection with Nārāyaṇa. Nārāyaṇa never becomes poor, and therefore He can never be called *daridra-nārāyaṇa*. Nārāyaṇa is certainly situated in everyone's heart, but He is neither poor nor rich. Only unscrupulous persons who do not know the opulence of Nārāyaṇa try to afflict Him with poverty." (SB 6.19.9, purport)

* *Sam*—complete; *pra—(an intensifier)* especially, very much, fully; *dāya*—giving.

* See also "aggressive grace" (vol. 1, p. 142).

† Śrīla Madhvācārya's commentary on *Aitareya Upaniṣad* demonstrates that all Vedic words and their syllables, all names of Vedic seers, sages, and deities, all meters employed in Sanskrit verse, and even the inarticulated sound of rivers, seas, etc., convey some aspect of the Supreme Lord's attributes. See also the discussion of *ajña-* and *vidvad-rūḍhi* (vol. 1, p. 331).

* The Ekāyana Maṭha was first established in January 1929 on rented premises in Krishnanagar. In March 1931 it was shifted to its own property in Hanskhali.

† *Rūḍhi*—"traditional or conventional meaning" or "the meaning that is immediately understood, without further intellectual analysis." These three kinds of meaning are discussed in Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's commentaries on Cb 2.1.147 and 2.1.368. *Sādhāraṇa* means "ordinary" or "conventional." The specific definition of *sādhārana-rūdhī* is not given therein.

See also the reference to *viṣṇu-sarvanāmatva* (vol. 1, p. 329), as well as the related terms

gauṇārtha (indirect meaning) and *mukhya artha* (direct or principal meaning), both in Cc 1.7.110.

* *Dhvani*—sound, or implied meaning; *ātmika*—composed of; *śabda*—word; *varṇa*— letter, color.

† Almost certainly, the *Vaiṣṇava-mañjuṣā-samāhṛti* project was inaugurated by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, for an appendix of that name originally appeared in 1886 within the first edition of *Śrī Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta.* This is stated in *Gauḍīya* 17.649, which featured the first seriate reproduction of the prototype *Vaiṣṇava-mañjuṣā-samāhṛti,* which in simple and succinct Bengali explained many obscure terms appearing in *Gauḍīya* literature. It seems that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī wanted to publish an expanded list of words with more comprehensive meanings.

‡ *Mukta*—free; *pragraha*—reins; *nyāya*—(the) logic (of).

§ For more misused words, see vol. 1, pp. 327–28.

* The lexigraphical section planned for *Vaiṣṇava-mañjuṣā* was one of several that remained unfinished at the time of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's departure.

† The novelist referred to is Bankim Candra Chatterji. In *Kṛṣṇa-caritra* (1889) he distinguished, as if different persons, Kṛṣṇa of Vṛndāvana from the Kṛṣṇa of Kurukṣetra and of Dvārakā, and introduced various Western-stylized speculations.

Apart from "life story," *caritra* also means character, conduct, manners, nature, disposition, activities.

New Bengal—epithet for an informal but influential movement of English-medium educated Western-oriented Bengali youth.

* Here *Śrī* refers to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

* *Kṛṣṇa-pakṣa*—the fortnight when the moon is waning; *aṣṭamī*—eighth day.

* Lion gate—an entrance flanked by ornamental forms of lions.

* Although Śrīla Bhaktivinoda's describing bricks, lime, and cement as *uddīpanas* is unconventional, it reflects a *mahā-bhāgavata's* seeing everything in relation to Kṛṣṇa and devotional service.

† After Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's *tirobhāva,* Śrīmad B.D. Mādhava Mahārāja established Maṭha*s* at both of these places.

‡ Vāsudeva Rāmānuja dāsa—See vol. 2, p. 68.

* Most (but not all) of these twenty-seven have been ascertained.

† *Jīu*—(1) *(sādhāraṇa-rūḍhi)* a respectful appendage to deity names; (2) *(vidvad-rūḍhi)* "living," emphasizing that the deity is not a mere statue.

* This order of large-size deities is probably the biggest in history.

* As there is no question of falldown for a devotee of the stature of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, this statement should be understood as both an expression of his own humility and as cautionary for less consummate devotees.

* In his preface to *Hari-bhakti-taraṅgiṇī,* Śrī Bipina Bihārī Goswami acknowledged Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's having edited that work. Even after Śrī Bipina Bihārī's demise, the *Gauḍīya* continued to advertise *Hari-bhakti-taraṅgiṇī.*

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura commissioned a booklet called *Arcana-kaṇā* (A particle of the system of worship), for giving basic directions on *arcana* in the Gauḍīya Maṭhas and for *gṛhastha* disciples performing worship at home.

* See also the discussion of *kīrtana* in relation to *arcana* (vol. 1, p. 208).

† The line beginning *jaya jaya gorācāndera* means "Glory, glory to the beautiful *ārati* ceremony of Lord Caitanya. This *ārati* for Lord Gaura is taking place in a grove on the banks of the Jāhnavī (Gaṅgā) and is attracting the minds of all living entities in the universe."

* *Satya*—true; *mithyā*—false.

* Discipular descendants of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura have explained that *visarjana* may be suitable for deities worshiped according to the rules of *vaidhī-bhakti* but deities worshiped by great devotees in the *rāga-mārga* should never be subject to *visarjana.*

* *Parāyaṇa*—recitation of a scripture from beginning to end, or as far as possible during a given time. For instance, in Gauḍīya Maṭhas *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* would be recited on Gaura-*jayantī.*

* *Nāma-yajñas* were already long established in Gauḍīya tradition.

* This is another example of a difference in method between Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda and Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. However, since Kṛṣṇa's chosen representatives know exactly how to present Kṛṣṇa consciousness acording to time, place, and circumstances, both Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda's not introducing Jhulana-yātrā in the Gauḍīya Maṭha, and His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda's introducing it in ISKCON, are perfect.

* *Puṣpānna*—a fancy rice preparation containing ingredients such as ghee, saffron, cashews, and raisins; *khicaḍi*—a preparation of rice and *ḍāl* (see vol. 1, pp. 446–47); *pāyasānna*—rice boiled in milk and sweetened.

* More from this quote is given in vol. 2, pp. 62–63.

* According to a court verdict, the particular portion of Māyāpur that was rediscovered and developed by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is to be written as "Sree Mayapur," and the area in Kuliyā claimed by others to be Māyāpur as "Sri Mayapur." In this book we refer to the former by the diacriticized form: (Śrī) Māyāpur.

* *Saraṇī*—road. The *Gauḍīya* (9.512) stated that by making this path, Advaita Babu had prepared a path for his elevation to Vaikuṇṭha.

* This sentence describes *sambandha, abhidheya,* and *prayojana* in relation to the *dhāma.*

* For more on why Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura "disobeyed" his guru's order to not go to Calcutta, see vol. 1, pp. 33–34.

† See the letter in vol. 2, p. 272.

* See vol. 1, p. 63.

* This Exhibition is described in vol. 1, pp. 355–56.

* Re how Bābājī Mahārāja's *samādhi* came to be situated in Navadvīpa, see vol. 1, p. 59.

* *Dhurandhara*—leader. The title Dharma-dhurandhara had been awarded by the Navadvīpa-dhāma-pracāriṇī Sabhā.

† This structure is now replaced with a larger one that houses sitting forms of Jagannātha Miśra and of Śacīmātā with baby Nimāi on her lap.

* Śiva-*liṅga*—Lord Śiva's genitals, the form in which he is generally worshiped.

Kṣetrapāla Mahādeva—great god, or protector of a holy place. (*Kṣetra*—area, or holy place; *pāla*—protector; *mahādeva*—great god; a name usually associated with Lord Śiva)

† Lakṣmī was established by mantra; after Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's *tirobhāva,* she appeared in deity form.

‡ *Anukūla-kṛṣṇānuśīlana*—from Brs 1.1.11 (see vol. 1, p. 283); *Āgāra*—house, dwelling.

* Although little record has been found of any activities of these institutions (possibly because they were established shortly before Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's *tirobhāva*), that they were

founded by an important *ācārya* stands as a signpost of specific services to be performed by subsequent discipular descendants.

† Īśodyāna—the garden of Rādhā. (*Īśā*—female controller, *udyāna*—garden)

* This point is further discussed in vol. 3, pp. 127–28.

† According to some, Vrajapattana is Mahāvana of Gokula, where Kṛṣṇa spent His infancy.

* His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda wrote: "Vāṇīnātha Vipra was a resident of Cāṅpāhāṭi, a village in the district of Burdwan near the town of Navadvīpa, the police station of Pūrvasthalī, and the post office of Samudragaḍa. The temple there was very much neglected, but it was renovated in the Bengali year 1328 [A.D. 1921] by Śrī Paramānanda Brahmacārī [one of Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's disciples], who reorganized the *sevā-pūjā* (worship in the temple) and placed the temple under the management of the Śrī Caitanya Maṭha of Śrī Māyāpur. In the temple as it now exists, the deity of Śrī Gaura-Gadādhara is worshiped strictly according to the principles of the revealed scriptures." (Cc 1.10.114, purport)

* All names mentioned in this paragraph are of great devotees connected with the pastimes of Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

* For more on the purposes of Śrī Vraja-dhāma-pracāriṇī Sabhā, see the article of that name in *Gauḍīya* 14.163–65.

* *Rāmaśiṁhā*—a long brass horn.

* See vol. 3, pp. 123–24, 125–28.

† Suradhunī (river of the gods) is a name for Gaṅgā.

‡ Various sources describe the number of pilgrims to have been either several hundred, five thousand, or thirteen thousand. The *Gauḍīya* (14.11.218) reported that on 7 October, two days before the scheduled commencement, five hundred pilgrims had arrived in Mathurā, with more expected. A photograph of the residential tents suggests no more than a thousand participants.

* Until recently in India, twigs of certain trees, especially neem, were universally used as toothbrushes.

* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura openly opposed Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa dāsa Bābājī on several issues, yet when the Vraja-maṇḍala Parikramā was passing by the ashram of Bābājī Mahārāja, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura told participants to go offer respects to him. (Told to the author by both O.B.L. Kapoor and Jati Śekhara Prabhu.)

† Śrī Madhusūdana dāsa Gosvāmī was a granddisciple of Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, and another of his disciples was Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī.

* See "A Lecture at Rādhā-kuṇḍa" (vol. 3, pp. 97–107).

* It was and is common for Indian villagers to defecate in fields.

† *Strī-śūdra-dvijabandhu*—women, lower-class men, and fallen descendants of the twice-born (SB 1.4.25).

* *Hā—(exclamation)* O.

† Śvetadvīpa—(1) the portion of the spiritual world to which Navadvīpa of this earth planet is equivalent; (2) a transcendental planet and abode of the Supreme Lord manifest within the material universe.

* Although not named in the written rendition of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's description of these incidents, the chief assistant was probably Śrī Paramānanda Brahmacārī.

† Pañcamī—the fifth day of the lunar cycle, sacred to Sarasvatī.

* Māyāpur is the name both of a specific village and of the area surrounding it. The village is situated just off the main road on the embankment, at a distance of about half a mile from the birthsite of Lord Caitanya. At that time the population of Māyāpur village was (and is still) almost all Muslim.

† Ballāl Dīghi—a nearby lake with an adjoining homonymous village.

‡ Cidghanānanda Prabhu was just six years old when he joined the Maṭha at Ultadingi Road. After the departure of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura he was awarded *sannyāsa,* with the name Bhakti Prapanna Dāmodara Mahārāja.

* The Sevā-vilāsa Brahmacārī mentioned here is different from Amṛtānanda Sevā-vilāsa Prabhu, mentioned in vol. 2, p. 265.

† Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu would see Lord Jagannātha as Madana-mohana, which was also the specific name of the *utsava-vigraha* of Jagannātha who enjoyed Candana-yātrā; and Gopīnātha was present as Ṭoṭā-gopīnātha. Yet Govinda was also present in Purī, as another *utsava-vigraha* of Jagannātha who enjoyed Candana-yātrā. Hence the meaning of this reported statement by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura is unclear.

‡ *Bāṭasāhi* (Oriya)—"lanes and paths";neighborhood.

* *Mad-bhakta-pūjābhyadhikā* (SB 11.19.21).

* *Bāg*—garden.

† Some Oriya scholars professed that worship of Kṛṣṇa had been going on in Orissa since time immemorial, and that Śrī Caitanya had introduced worship of Rādhā along with Kṛṣṇa, which they considered an unauthorized speculation.

‡ *Utkale puruṣottamāt*—See the full verse (vol. 1, p. 1).

* Lord Jagannātha's Ratha-yātrā has always been open to everyone without restriction. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was simply stressing the principle that *bhakti* should be performed without personal desire.

† See a translation of this verse in vol. 1, p. 117.

‡ Nafar Pal was an influential zamindar of Nadia District. Over many years he had assisted Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī, and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. With Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's approval he had become the first secretary of the Navadvīpa-dhāma-pracāriṇī Sabhā.

* Several other ghost stories in circulation concerning Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī were deliberately not included in this book.

† *Naḷiās*—sea-fishers in Purī, who often save bathing pilgrims from drowning in the impetuous waves.

* Ālālanātha is the name used in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and other *Gauḍīya* literature for Ālvāranātha (Lord of the Ālvāras), the name of the ancient deity there. In modern Oriya the form "Alarnath" is used.

‡ In the name Brahmagiri, *Brahma* refers to followers of Lord Brahmā, and *giri* means hill.

* *Parā*—transcendental; *vidyā*—knowledge; *pīṭha*—seat.

Commenting on the words *bhāgavata vicāra*, "deliberation on the knowledge of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*" (Cc 2.19.17), Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura cited *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.1.4–5:

*

> *dve vidye veditavya iti, ha sma yad brahma-vido vadanti—parā caivāparā ca. tatrāparā ṛg-vedo yajur-vedaḥ sāma-vedo 'tharva-vedaḥ śikṣā kalpo vyākaraṇaṁ niruktaṁ chando jyotiṣam iti. atha parā yayā tad akṣaram adhigamyate.*
>
> There are two kinds of educational systems: one that deals with transcendental knowledge, *parā-vidyā*, and the other with material knowledge, *aparā-vidyā.* The *Ṛg, Yajur, Sāma,* and *Atharva Vedas,* along with their corollaries—known as *śikṣā, kalpa, vyākaraṇa,*

nirukta, chanda, and *jyotiṣa*—belong to the inferior system of *aparā-vidyā.* By *parā-vidyā* one can understand the *akṣara*—Brahman, the Absolute Truth.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī further analyzed: "Topics of *parā-vidyā* are explained in *Vedānta-sūtra.* Those who study Vedānta and aspire for impersonal liberation are, like those desirous of *dharma, artha,* and *kāma,* involved in deceptiveness. Hence those who are attached to *aparā-vidyā,* as well as all speeches and expositions motivated by desire for liberation and opposed to the purely devotional *śāstras* that expound *parā-vidyā,* are simply full of cheating. But the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is not like that. *Karmīs,* who are punishable by Yama, and persons who adhere to *ahaṅgrahopāsanā,* are totally unfit for *bhāgavata vicāra.* Only the Vaiṣṇavas, by *bhāgavata vicāra,* become fully liberated from material existence."

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's desire for an educational institution in Māyāpur is recorded in vol. 1, p. 65.

* See "Examinations" (vol. 3, pp. 249–50).

* Mundane dramas, especially the much-lauded compositions of Kalidāsa, are among the most famous works in Sanskrit and are standard in government-approved syllabi.

* For a description of that deprecation, according to the *Harmonist,* see vol. 1, p. 152.

† An early *Gauḍīya* included the name of Abhaya Caraṇa De as having donated "Rs. 1 only."

* Śrī Vaiṣṇavānanda Vraja-vāsī was later awarded *sannyāsa* by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, with the name Śrīmad Bhakti Prasūna Bodhāyana Mahārāja.

† In India it is a common practice to treat the hair with coconut oil. This anecdote (told by Jati Śekhara Prabhu) suggests that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī feared that misuse of funds would so seriously corrupt the Mission that its Maṭhas (at that time inhabited only by renunciants and detached *gṛhasthas*) would become—like many other temples—havens for the sense indulgence of materialistic householders.

* For an example of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī speaking forthrightly to a rich man, see vol. 2, p. 201.

* *Mādhukarī*—traditional begging of sadhus from door to door, collecting a little from each place, just as a bee (*mādhukara*) goes from flower to flower and takes a little nectar from each.

* *Mahānta* generally denotes the proprietor of a temple or institutional head of an ashram. Here Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura is referring to those *mahāntas* more interested in collecting funds and living at ease than in spiritual development. By managing a temple, they manage to live quite comfortably.

* *Muṣṭi-dāna* is also called *muṣṭi-bhikṣā*. (*Muṣṭi*—fist; *dāna, bhikṣā*—donation)

* A possible reason for this instruction was that Marwaris were reputed for shady business dealings. Lord Caitanya's warning that the contaminated consciousness of rich and materialistic persons adversely affects those who partake of their offerings is described in Cc 1.12.50–52.

* For Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's soliciting a major donation from Maharaja Maṇīndra-candra Nandī, see vol. 1, pp. 79–80.

* See Glossary: Non-malefic mercy.

* Although one may need to fill a hole, only a fool would use gold to do so. In this context, the analogy suggests that similarly foolish is to misdirect the altruistic spirit solely toward bodily welfare, or to misuse human life in temporal altruism.

* Altruism often results in violence to animals, especially when meat is fed to the hungry.

* *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.8) describes how Mahārāja Bharata, although an elevated devotee, became attached to a fawn, thought of that deer at the end of his life, and so took his next birth as a deer.

* A snake fed milk does not become grateful, but more poisonous. (See verse in vol. 2, p. 198)

† *Ārta*—distressed.

* Compare this anecdote with that of the large-scale embezzling by a leading manager (see vol. 1, pp. 106–7), which was tolerated by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī on the grounds that the perpetrator had been and was still performing significant service. Whereas the *pūjārī* was told to relinquish the dress and role of a sadhu (yet was not excommunicated from devotional service), there was no question of that leading manager having to forswear the dress of a sadhu, because he was a *gṛhastha*.

† *Ḍāb*—tender, green coconut, the water of which is drunk.

* This might not have always been his policy, as suggested by the description of Vidyullatā-devī, who served him in his pre-*sannyāsa* days. (See vol. 2, p. 327)

* Although according to the modern Western outlook these comments would be considered outrageous, such understanding was perennially intrinsic to Hindu culture. For although the Vedic scriptures praise the qualities of virtuous ladies, they also warn against the tendency of women to be grossly materialistic and foolish, and to stymie self-realization by spinning webs of illusory attraction. This latter type of description was traditionally emphasized by sadhus.

* Re writing competitions, see vol. 1, p. 73, and re the published writing of Aparṇā-devī, see

vol. 2, p. 354.

† Goddess Ṣaṣṭhī was widely invoked by Hindu women in Bengal for protection of their newly born children. But probably the locket was named after the daughter-in-law of Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya. Although not neglecting her duties to her husband, Ṣaṣṭhī (commonly known by the nickname Ṣāṭhī) was more devoted to Mahāprabhu.

* In India, unmarried girls were strictly controlled by their fathers, and married women by their husbands or adult sons. Therefore it is practically certain that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura neither would nor could have given initation to females without their guardians' permission—which suggests that his female disciples were mostly the kin of his male disciples, as was indeed the case for most about whom information is available.

† Īśāna—the elderly devotee-servant who took care of Śacīdevī and Viṣṇupriyā-devī after Śrīman Mahāprabhu left home.

* *Luci*—fried flatbread similar to puri but made with white flour.

† *Sajanā* ("drumsticks")—long, thin vegetables with a hard green outer coating, soft and white inside; usually chewed and the remains of the outer coating spat out.

* *Ḍhākāi*—(1) covered; (2) of or relating to Dacca.

† Bengali milk sweets, made from fresh soft cheese and other dairy products and prepared in innumerable ways—as *cāmcām, rasagullā, rasamalāi, sandeśa,* and other varieties—are popular throughout India. Expert sweet-makers work in reputed sweetshops, each known for their particular specialties. In those days, for instance, a particular shop in Bāg-bazar was famous for *rasagullās.*

Milk preparations are an exception to the rule that purchased cooked food may not be offered to deities.

‡ Childhood vow—See vol. 1, p. 8.

* *Urad*—a type of lentil.

† "Properly" means *yathā-vidhi* (according to *śāstrīya* injunction) and with *bhakti.* See Bg 9.26, wherein offering with *bhakti* is stressed and *prayata* (ritually pure) is mentioned.

‡ *Gehaṁ juṣam*—"of those engaged in family affairs" (SB 10.82.48). (See the full verse in vol. 1, p. 226, and vol. 3, p. 99)

* See also his statement "The Lord does not recognize offerings from a *pūjārī* who is blind to knowledge of the Absolute" (vol. 1, p. 52).

* *Anukalpa* (secondary, or substitute rule)—foods permitted on Ekādaśī, such as milk products, nuts, sago, fruits, and certain vegetables.

† Dvādaśī—the day after Ekādaśī.

* The severe austerities that he first observed are described in vol. 1, pp. 26, 40.

† Vraja Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja—the Gauḍīya Maṭha branch in the village named after and adjacent to Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

Yama-kīrtana—songs recited according to the time of day, concurring with the pastimes performed by Kṛṣṇa during those periods.

* It is not clear which village this is, for there are several by the name of Madhupur in Bengal and neighboring states.

* From this incident it may be deduced that even if a pure devotee sometimes speaks in a manner apparently not connected to Kṛṣṇa, such as asking a person's name and background, his single-pointed attitude of service to Kṛṣṇa empowers those words to impel others toward Kṛṣṇa—in contrast to the apparent Kṛṣṇa-*kathā* of cheaters, which can never help anyone become Kṛṣṇa conscious.

* In this regard His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda wrote: "My guru-*mahārāja* claimed to be one of the sub-devotee assistants of the eight *gopīs*." (Letter, 5 February 1969)

When Śrīla B.D. Mādhava Mahārāja secured the birthplace of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī at Purī and installed deities there, he revealed Their names as Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Nayanānanda Jīu. And to stimulate remembrance of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī as Nayana-maṇi Mañjarī and also invoke her blessings for assisting in her special service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Śrīmad B.D. Mādhava Mahārāja included "Nayana" in names of deities of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa that he installed elsewhere.

† The other instructions are listed in vol. 1, p. 55, in the sentence beginning "Shedding profuse tears."

‡ In the well-known song beginning *yaśomatī-nandana braja-baro-nāgara,* Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura describes Śrī Kṛṣṇa as *gopī-parāṇa-dhana* (the wealth of the *gopīs'* lives)." In a song revealing secrets of the highest stage of perfection, he gives another definition of the wealth of the *gopīs* in the line *svārasikī siddhi vraja-gopī-dhana:* "The treasure of the Vraja-*gopīs* is their *svārasikī siddhi*, the eternal perfection of the personal mellow that each of them expresses."

Svārasikī refers to an innate personal aptitude for a specific service in pure love of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and is the hallmark of perfect spontaneous attachment to Him. As defined by Śrīla Rūpa

Gosvāmī:

> *iṣṭe svārasikī rāgaḥ paramāviṣṭatā bhavet*
> *tan-mayī yā bhaved bhaktiḥ sātra rāgātmikoditā*
>
> *Rāgātmikā* (*bhakti* characterized by spontaneous attachment) is the stage at which one's own innate aptitude in love (*svārasikī*) is focused on the object of one's love, whereupon one becomes fully absorbed in thoughts of Him (Brs 1.2.272).

Thus *gopīdhana* may also be understood as *svārasikī siddhi,* the *gopīs'* treasure of spontaneous and fully absorbed loving service to the objects of their unalloyed attachment, Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa; and it was this most confidential topic, the final object of all spiritual exploration, that on Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's order was to be broadcast by Śrī Vārṣabhānavī-dayita dāsa, the intimate servant of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

* *Ārādhyo bhagavān vrajeśa-tanayas tad-dhāma vṛndāvanam:* "The Supreme Personality of Godhead, the son of Nanda Mahārāja, is to be worshiped along with His transcendental abode Vṛndāvana."

† *Unnatojjvala-rasa*—topmost resplendent *rasa* of conjugal love (Cc 1.1.4) (see the full verse in vol. 3, p. 79); Rādhā-*dāsya*—the position of service to Rādhā.

* The daughter of Vṛṣabhānu is Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and Her beloved is Śrī Kṛṣṇa. "Servant of Her beloved" refers to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

* *Daṇḍavat parikramā*—circumambulation undertaken by offering obeisances at every step.

* For the *śloka* defining this, see vol. 1, p. 283.

* *Āśraya* and *viṣaya* are terms adopted from *vyākaraṇa-śāstra,* or grammar. The aspect of Sanskrit grammar that deals with the syntactical relationships within a sentence (*kāraka*) describes that the locative case is of two types, *āśraya-saptamī* and *viṣaya-saptamī,* meaning respectively that the location is either (depending upon context) the shelter for the doer or object, or their destination. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī employed these terms in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* to describe the dynamics of *rasa.* It appears that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura introduced the terms *āśraya-vigraha* and *viṣaya-vigraha.*

* Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī superficially belonged to this subcaste. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda wrote: "The *kāyastha* class of Bengal is regarded all over India as *śūdras.* It is said that the Bengali *kāyasthas* were originally engaged as servants of *brāhmaṇas* who came from North India to Bengal. Later, the clerical class became the *kāyasthas* in Bengal. Now there are many mixed classes known as *kāyasthas.* Sometimes it is said in Bengal that those who cannot claim any particular class belong to the *kāyastha* class. Although these *kāyasthas* are considered *śūdras,* they are very

intelligent and highly educated. Most of them are professionals, such as lawyers or politicians." (Cc 2.7.63, purport)

* This fourth definition (although not employed within the context of this book) is an important usage.

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In subentries, the name Bhaktisiddhānta is usually abbreviated as BST but is alphabetized as if spelled out. Similarly, Gauḍīya Maṭha is abbreviated in subentries as GM yet alphabetized as if spelled out. Honorifics have not been included in proper names.

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Places Visited by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

Locations are approximate. Asterisks indicate places visited but not mentioned in this book. Toponyms are according to standard usage circa 1930.

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Faizabad
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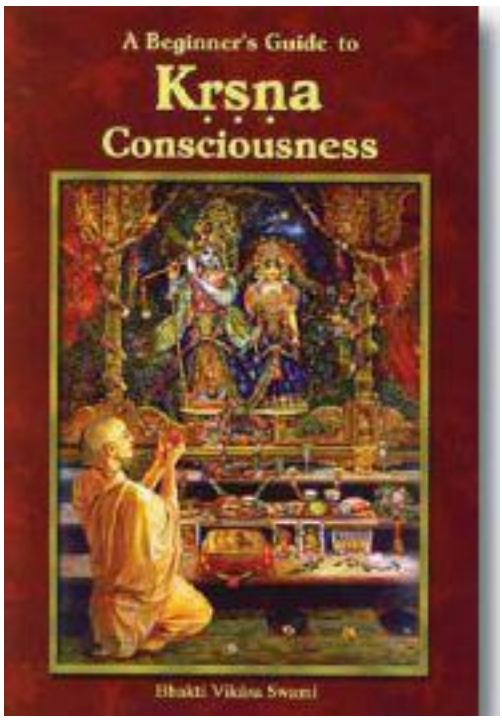

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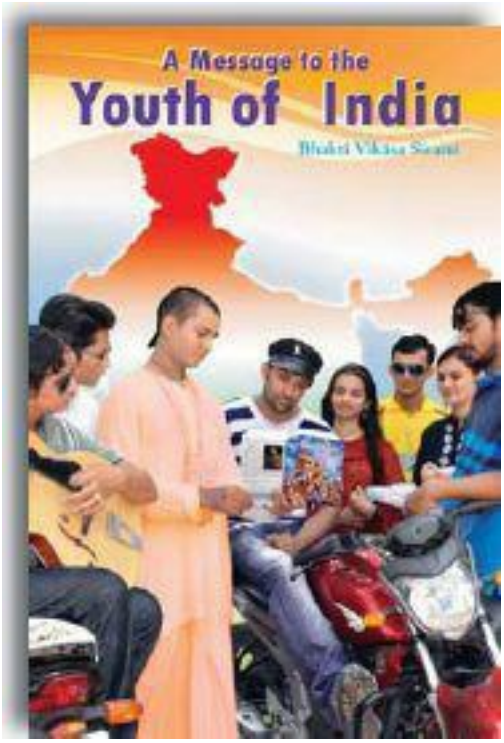

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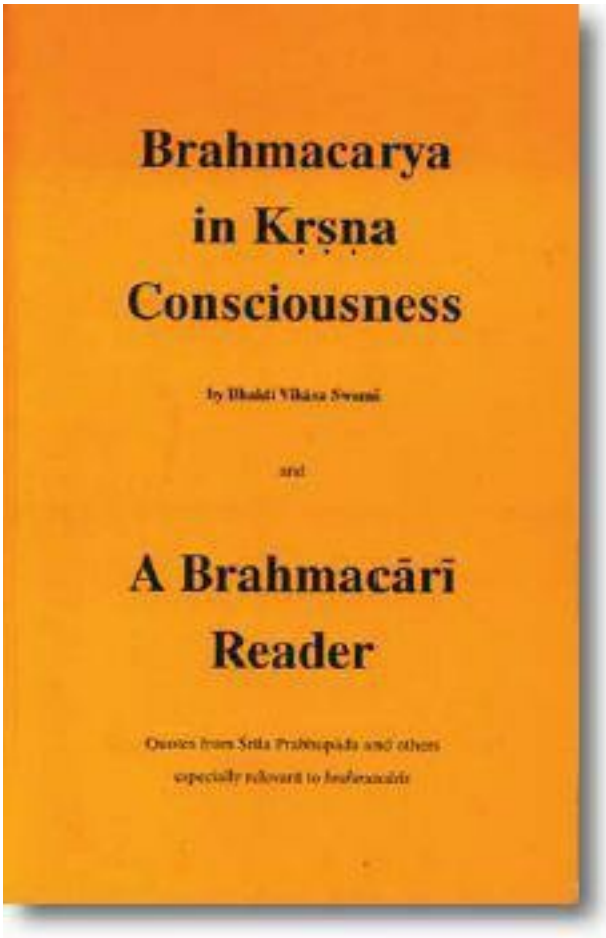

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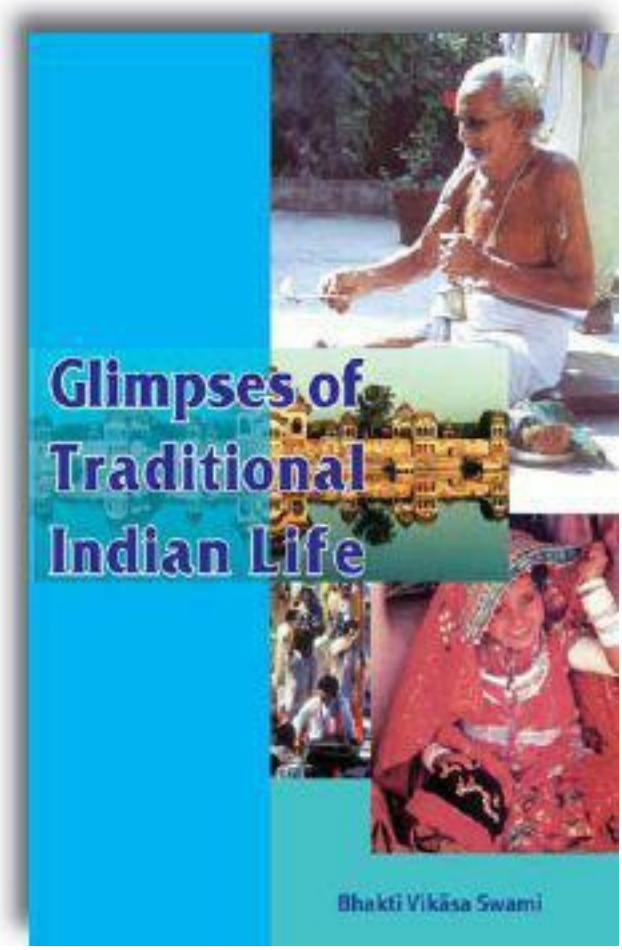

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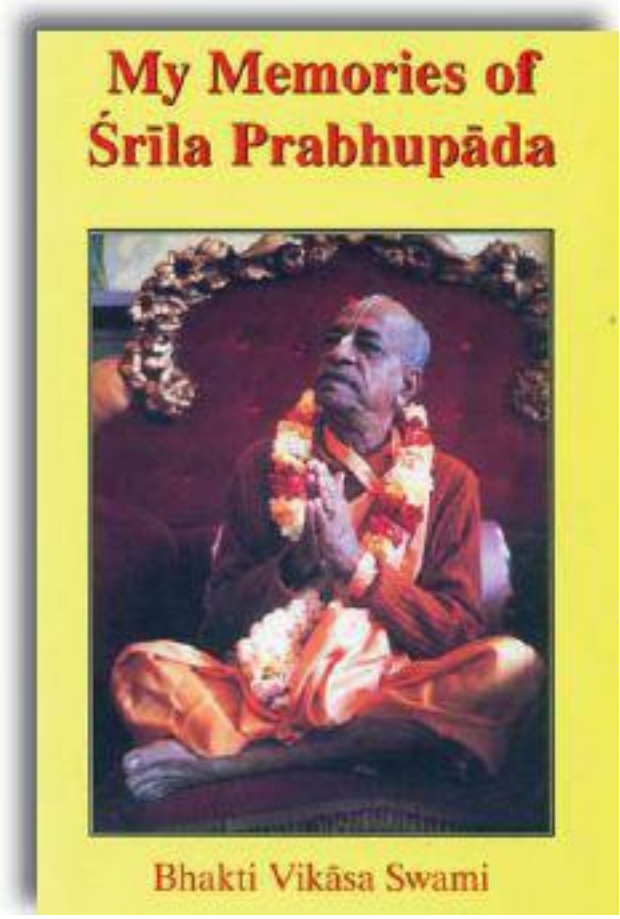

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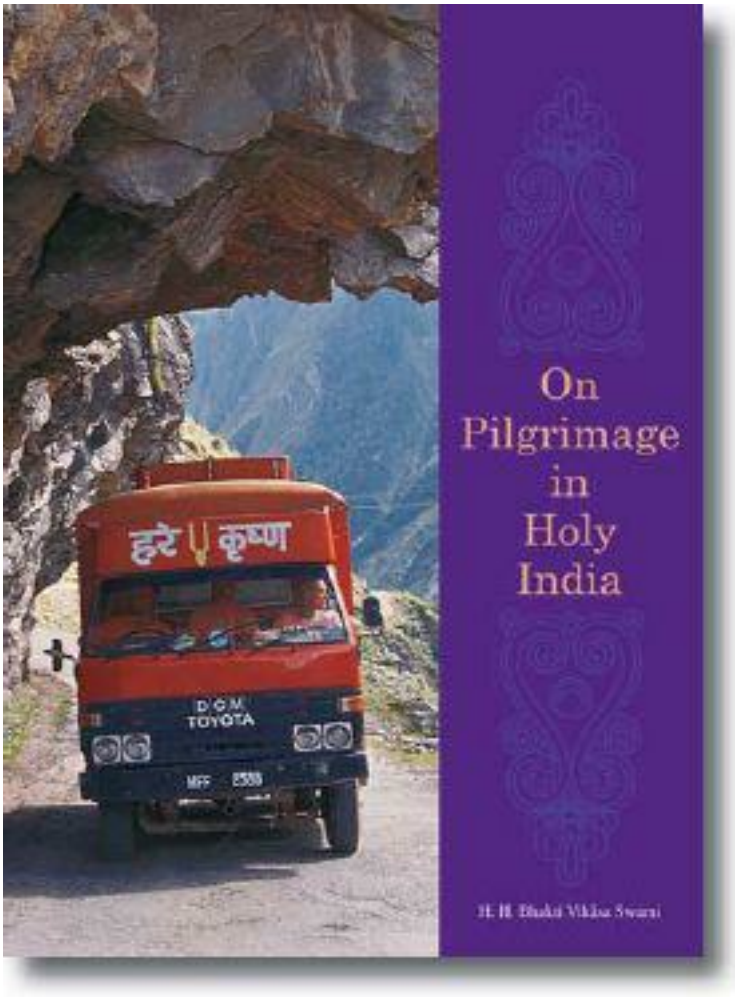

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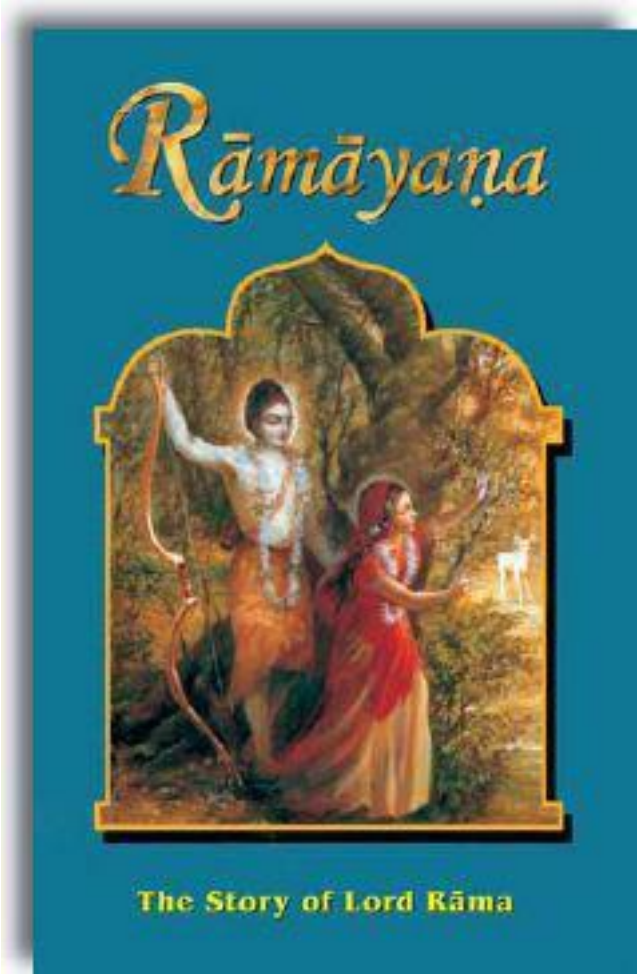

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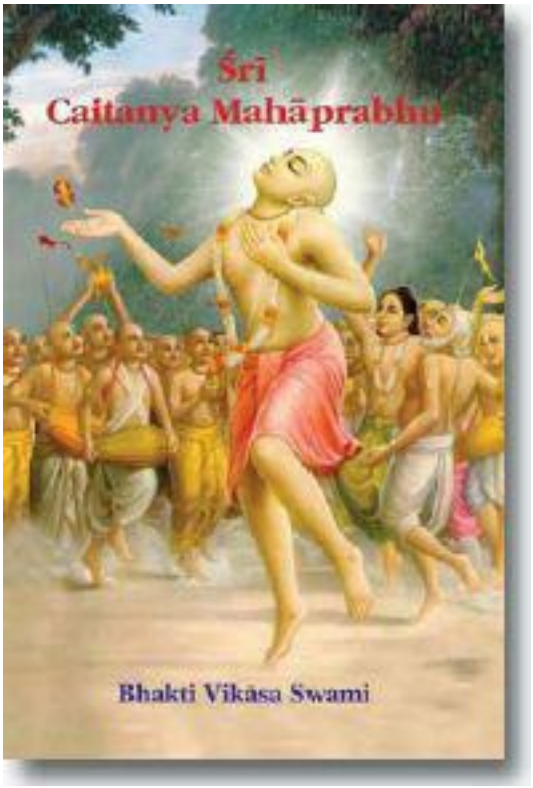

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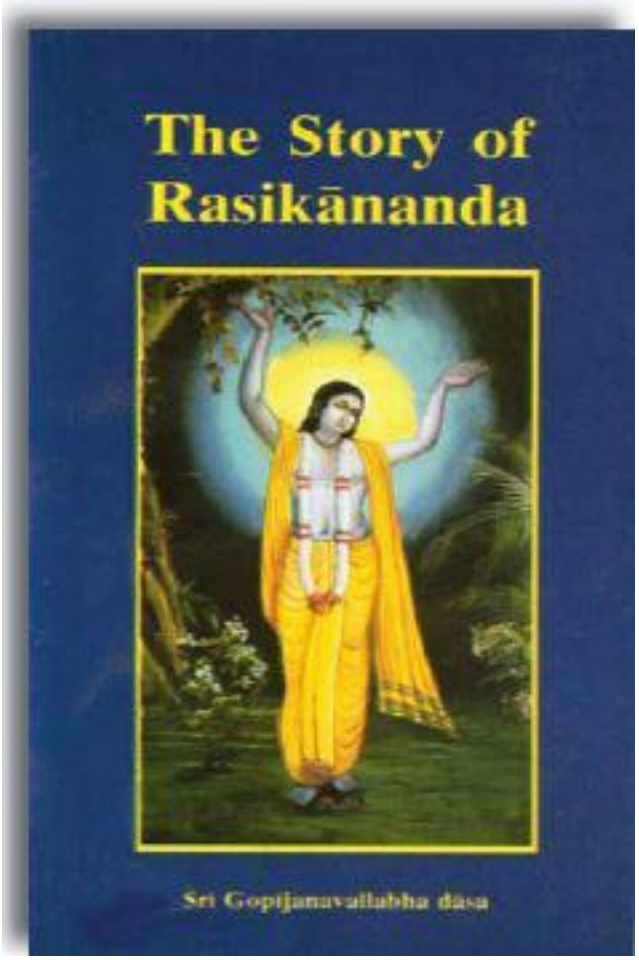

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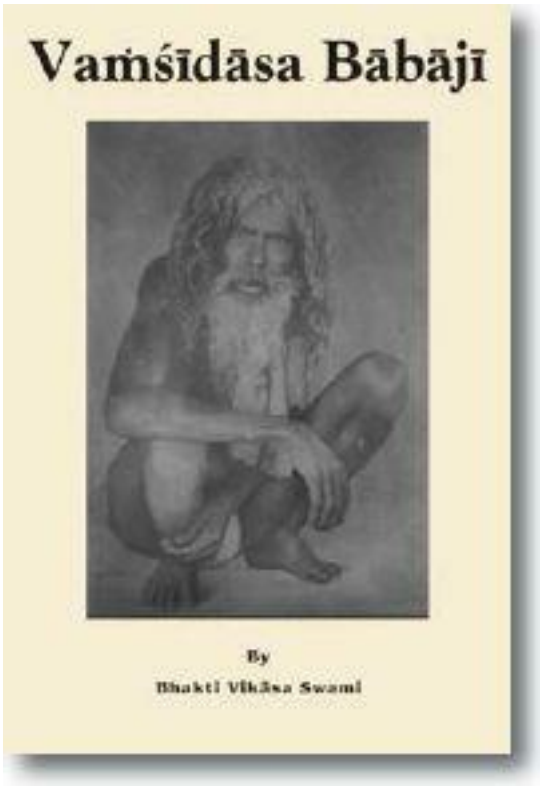

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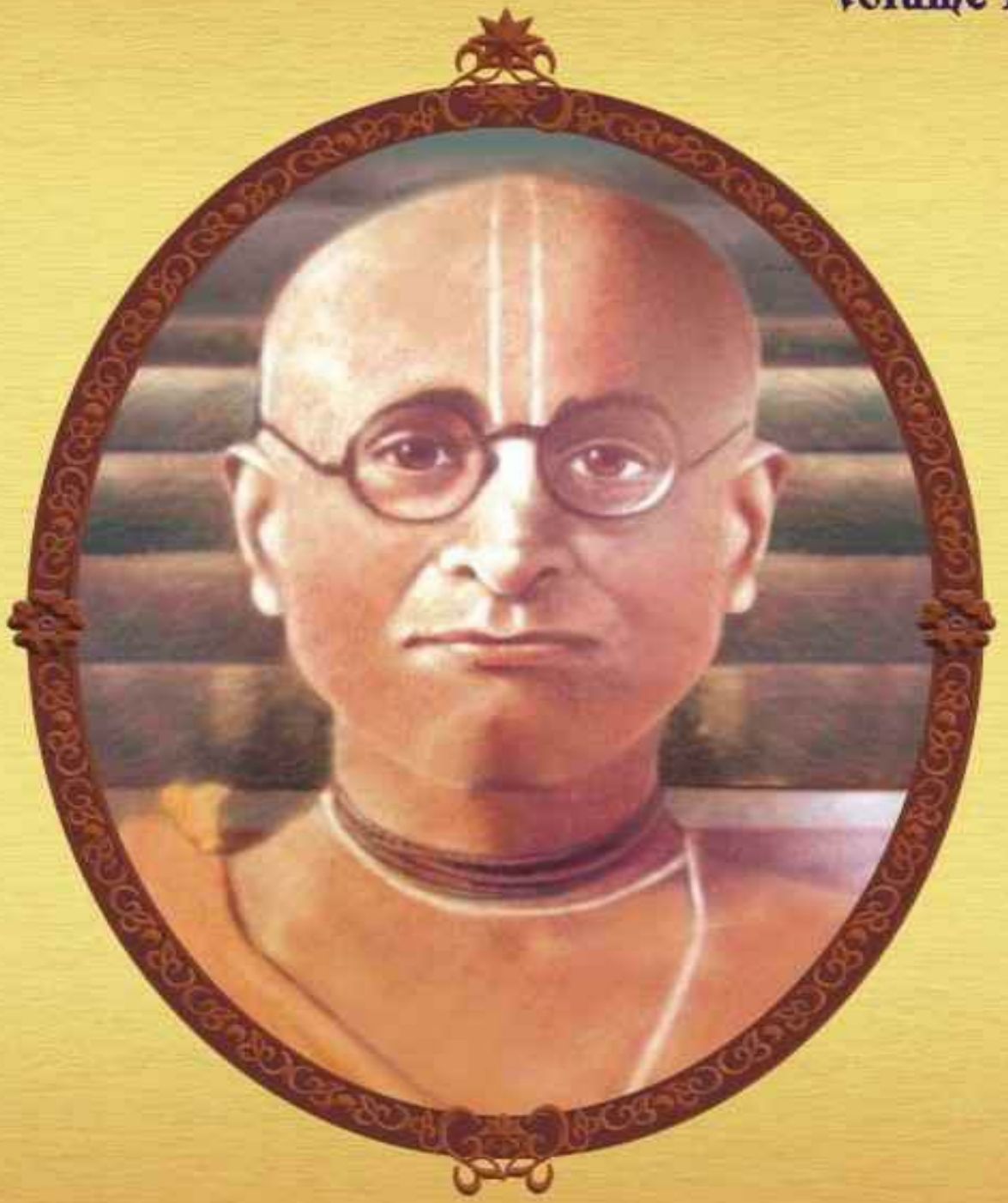

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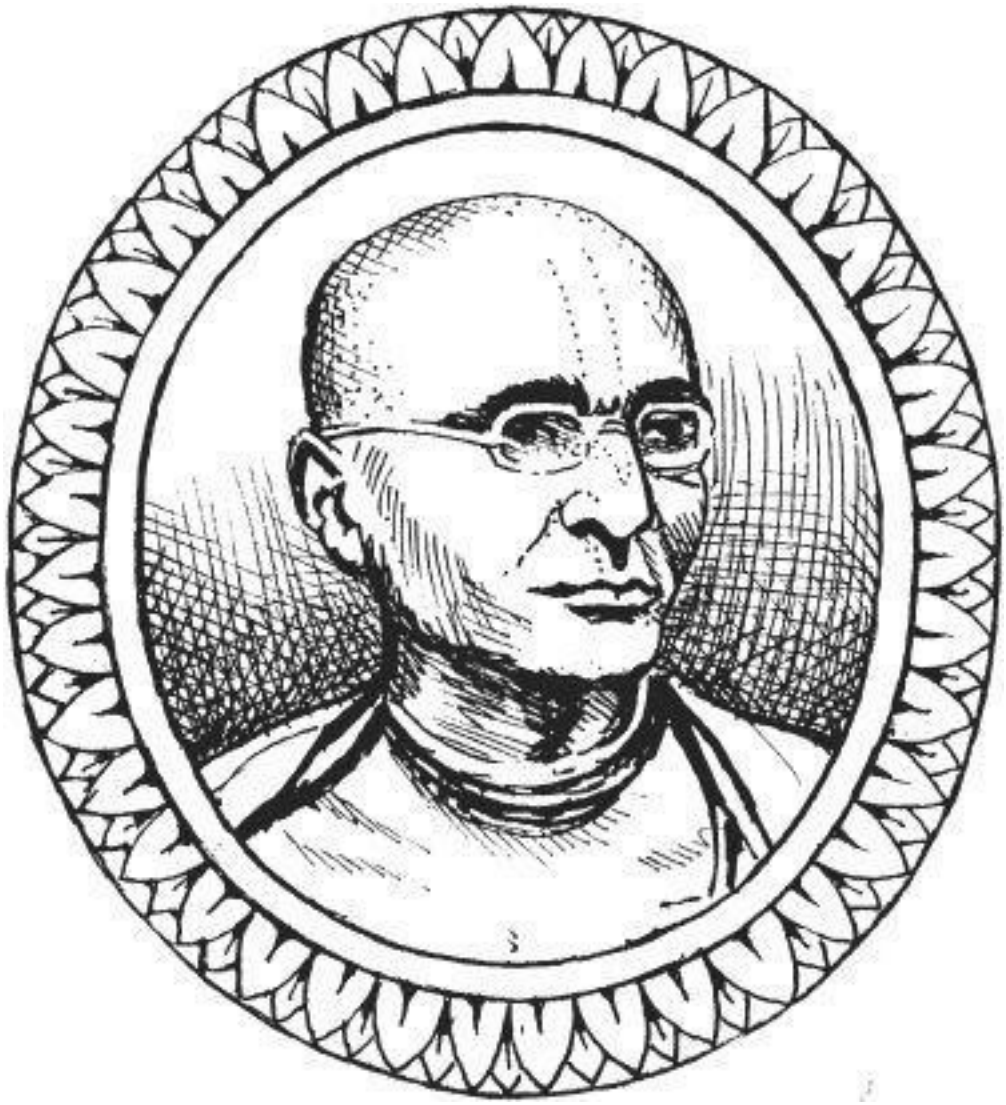

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In his room at the Kuñja-bihārī Maṭha in Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī instructed Śrī Abhaya Caraṇāravinda dāsa, “If you ever get money, print books.” Also present were Śrī Ananta Vāsudeva dāsa (shown here fanning Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī) and a son of Śrī Abhaya Caraṇāravinda dāsa.

Based on a description told by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda to his disciple Śrī Ādi-keśava dāsa, this scene was painted by another of his disciples, Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta dāsa.

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Volume 2

Part 3: The Preaching Challenge

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- Bengal

Abbreviations of Book Titles

An asterisk indicates a compilation of the teachings of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, or a book written about him.

Av: *Amrta vani**

Bg: *Bhagavad-gītā*

Brs: *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*

Cb: *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*

Cc: *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*

Gv: *Śrīla Prabhupādera Goloka-vāṇī**

Hk: *Śrīla Prabhupādera Hari-kathāmṛta**

PST: *Prabhupada Saraswati Thakur** (English)

SB: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*

SBT: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavat Tātparya** (English)

SCT: *Shri Chaitanya's Teachings** (English)

Sj: *Sarasvatī-jayaśrī**

SPl: *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta* (English)

SPU: *Śrī Śrīla Prabhupādera Upadeśāmṛta**

Guide to References

References are given according to the following examples:

Av 10: *Amrta vani,* p. 10.

Cc 1.16: *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā,* chap. 16.

Cc 2.16.22: *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā,* chap. 16, verse 22.

Cc 3.2.75, 77–80: *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā,* chap. 2, verse 75 and verses 77–80*

Gauḍīya 3.27.8–13: *Gauḍīya,* vol. 3, no. 27, pp. 8–13.

Gauḍīya 14.163: *Gauḍīya,* vol. 14, p. 163.

Gauḍīya 20.48–49.540: *Gauḍīya,* vol. 20, nos. 48–49, p. 540.†

Harmonist 31.487: *Harmonist,* vol. 31, p. 487.

Hk 2.15: *Śrīla Prabhupādera Hari-kathāmṛta,* vol. 2, p. 15.

Śikṣāṣṭaka 4: *Śikṣāṣṭaka,* verse 4.

Sj 24: *Sarasvatī-jayaśrī,* p. 24.

Some references cited herein are from Gauḍīya Maṭha editions and differ from those in corresponding Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (BBT) publications.

Part Three:
The Preaching Challenge

One

Response to Modern Trends

Indian civilization had always accorded exceptional respect to scholarship, for Vedic knowledge was its very marrow. In the early twentieth century scriptural education was still widespread, and thus much of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's preaching paralleled that of previous *ācāryas* in addressing misconceptions of *paṇḍitas* whose vast knowledge of and implicit faith in *śāstrīya* tenets was contaminated by nondevotional, pseudo-devotional, or incomplete interpretations. Yet Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura also had to contend with a relatively new set of misconstructions, for Vedic education was gradually being supplanted by a different knowledge system, that of modern science, based on sense perception and logic.[*]

Before the arrival of the Europeans with their wholly different outlook on life, Hindus had pursued an uneasy modus vivendi with Islam, which however they could safely categorize as merely another type of religion, an inferior one at that, which they kept aloof from and felt little need to pander to. But the largely static social and cultural condition of India changed radically when analytic science and modern rationalism cast Hinduism as an unenlightened creed born of a savage culture—its ritualism meaningless, its "mythology" imbecile, and its caste system repressive.

Although British dominion had brought stability to Indian society and purged some inhuman practices from it, the complex societal changes it concomitantly wrought had also resulted in widespread uncertainty and anomie. Nevertheless the ascendant intellectual elite of Westernized Indians remained mesmerized by the prospective better life that contemporary thinking and technological advances purported to afford. Willingly indoctrinated to accept Western thought as the exclusive platform of factual knowledge, and convinced that higher culture had to be learned from abroad, these toady sophists eagerly embraced European-style (i.e., predominantly secular) education and proficiency in English as a convenient passport for entry into the political and commercial life of the world, and snubbed their forebears' civilization, culture, and scholarly tradition, although much older and deeper than that of Europe, as backward and ignorant, or at best outdated.[1][*]

Such awe for everything European derived significantly from the white man's own sense of preeminence, which seemed axiomatic, for although grossly outnumbered—there was less than one Briton in India for each thousand of the local population—and far from home shores, the British had nonetheless been able to unify and control the formerly perennially fractured and volatile subcontinent.[†] Their dynamism and worldly superiority, their bold domineering entrepreneurial spirit and pragmatic goal-oriented mindset, and their continuous waves of extraordinary undreamed-of technological innovations—electric lights, railways, telegrams, printing presses, and ever more exciting gadgets promised for the future—made the Westerners seem like gods more tangible than the gods of *śāstra.* This technological mastery, combined

with expertise in administration and indeed all facets of material affairs, enabled them to lord over the world in a manner previously unimaginable. The Britishers, considering themselves natural repositories of virtue, intelligence, and the grace of God, thus accepted "the white man's burden"—their supposed responsibility to govern and thus benefit the inherently uncivilized and incapable nonwhites.[‡] Faced with the apparent truth of the Anglo-Saxons' implied message—that Indians should admit their undeniable inferiority, abandon their ancient dharma, tradition, and norms, and become Westernized—Hindus became jerked out of a centuries-old lassitude.

Yet rather than discarding their traditions and culture, many modern-educated Hindus adopted modified forms of Hinduism meant to keep pace with Western notions of rationalism and science. Galvanized by European literature that extolled Christian brotherhood, democracy, and human rights (which ironically had little practical application in the autocratically ruled colonies), the bolder of these reformers shook the British by stirring up nationalist sentiment, and also caused furor within Hindu society by campaigning against ancient social mores, such as those proscribing inter-caste dining and marriage, widow remarriage, and education for females and lower castes, or those promoting child marriage.[§]

These nouveaux cognoscenti regarded the farce masquerading as Vaiṣṇava dharma to be far below their dignity. Unaware of Vaiṣṇava dharma beyond that bogus brand, they jettisoned it as epitomizing a Hinduism they considered low-class, irrelevant, irrational, dogmatic, sentimental, effeminate, superstitious, decrepit, retrogressive, and so risible that in contemporary Bengali drama the role of the fool was typically depicted as a Vaiṣṇava. Yet ironically, due to their ignorance of the underlying tenets of Vedic culture, they failed to detect that the new quasi-religious societies with which they preferred to align themselves were so divorced from those tenets that such groups' efforts to revitalize Vedic culture were actually sabotaging it.

Although the popular Hinduism of the masses continued essentially unaffected, Western-oriented Hindus could no longer blithely subscribe to the rituals and customs that had regulated untold generations of their forefathers. Recognizing in the mirror of modern rational thought the decadence prevalent in Hindu social life and the unprecedented challenges effected by current thought, and stirred by the continuing lack of response to Christian taunts against Hinduism, freethinking Hindus sought to reinterpret and thus reform and revivify their dharma. Hence, prevenient to the advent of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, movements such as the Brahmo Samāj, Ārya Samāj, and Ramakrishna Mission had attempted to overhaul Hinduism by reconciling it with current social permutations and political ideals and by grafting liberal Enlightenment thought onto their own take on spirituality.

During the last quarter of the eighteenth century and first half of the nineteenth, as a consequence of British patronage to the classical intellectual tradition of India and of the later promotion of European education, Calcutta became the nucleus of a new, largely Hindu clerisy, which authored the cultural efflorescence known as the Bengali Renaissance—an informal movement prominent during the middle years of the nineteenth century that looked back to and

sought to revive the best of pristine Bengali culture, while also aiming to appeal to contemporary notions of rational thought and to synthesize Indian and Western approaches to literature and culture.

The Brahmo Samāj was a prominent offshoot of the Bengali Renaissance. Its predecessor, the Brahmo Sabhā, established in Calcutta in 1828, attempted to syncretize facets of Hinduism, Christianity, and progressive secularism. The founder, Rāmmohan Roy, was strongly anti-Vaiṣṇava, though this trait was not shared by all members. In 1843, ten years after Rāmmohan Roy's death, the Brahmo Sabhā merged with Debendranath Tagore's Tattva-bodhinī Sabhā to form the Brahmo Samāj.* Despite being composed almost entirely of Hindus (initially caste *brāhmaṇas*), the Brahmo Samāj rejected some essentials of Hindu thought, including recognition of Vedic authority and the phenomenon of avatars. It emphasized what it deemed a rationalistic view of Vedic lore, rejected the "superstitiousness" typifying popular Hinduism, did not insist on belief in rebirth and karmic reactions, adhered (at least initially) to a firmly monistic outlook, scorned the efficacy of Vedic mantras and holy places, and denounced polytheism, deity worship—calling it, after British fashion, "idol worship"—and the caste system (caste *brāhmaṇas* who joined their ranks would discard their *upavīta*). Eventually the Brahmo Samāj adopted an ecumenical outlook, respecting all religious scriptures yet considering none infallible.

"Brahmos" (as they were known) quickly became influential among educated Hindus in Bengal and attracted many eminent intellectuals—headed by the legendary Tagore family, revered as upholders, promoters, and unusually gifted practitioners of Bengali language, literature, and culture. Although initially conceived as a new dharma that would emerge from the ashes of an obsolete Hinduism—as had Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism in the past—the Brahmo Samāj spread to various parts of India yet never gathered substantial popular support beyond a core constituency of Bengali intellectuals, and was plagued by schismatism. After a period of influencing some significant social and legal reforms, in the early twentieth century Brahmo-dharma lapsed into insignificance.

The Ārya Samāj, founded by Dayānanda Sarasvatī in 1875 in Bombay and most prominent in Punjab, was similar in ideals to the Brahmo Samāj yet differed by being widely diffused throughout several areas of India. Dayānanda propagated that only the original four Vedas were valid, declaring other standard Hindu texts, even Vedānta, to be unreliable accretions. But according to his own interpretation, he arbitrarily accepted certain Hindu doctrines generally considered post-Vedic. The Ārya Samāj endeavored to incorporate pristine elements of Vedic culture while rejecting what Dayānanda adjudged deleterious and stultifying conventions: idolatry, animal sacrifice, worship of ancestors, caste based on birth rather than merit, untouchability, child marriage, pilgrimages, priesthood, and temple offerings. In particular, Dayānanda Sarasvatī repudiated as oppressive and uncivilized the prescriptions for women as found in *Manu-smṛti, Rāmāyaṇa,* and other such foundational books of Vedic culture. His Ārya Samāj also promoted social work, modern education, and nationalism.

The Ramakrishna Mission, founded by Swami Vivekananda in Calcutta in 1897 after the death of Ramakrishna, did much to reassure Hindus of the validity of their own culture. This first major Hindu organization to dub itself a mission—after the style of Christian welfare workers cum proselyters—was focused on a personage acclaimed as the greatest mystic and God-realized soul of the era: "Paramahaṁsa" Ramakrishna. Further propelled by the charisma, drive, and colossal reputation of Vivekananda, who was Ramakrishna's most prominent disciple, this mission, even more than prior restructuring movements, aimed to present Hinduism as a pragmatic religion suited to the progressive age. Vivekananda combined Ramakrishna's eclectic all-encompassing mystagogy with his own speculative cerebrations and realistic everyday concerns, and thus declaring that true Vedānta meant practical action, concluded it better to play football than read *Bhagavad-gītā*.* Because formerly, feeding the poor, running hospitals and schools, disaster relief, and other such charitable work had mainly been the preserve of individual philanthropists, the Ramakrishna Mission's well organized and effective social welfare programs garnered widespread admiration and support.

These various genres of adaptive Hinduism, although implementing numerous Western methods and principles while attempting to level the angularities of current Hinduism, sought to establish that their religion was essentially pure and holy. This was in response to those upright and sexually restrained Christians who jibed that the gods to whom Hindus prostrated, although mythical, were a grossly immoral bunch. That accusation particularly targetted Kṛṣṇa, and seemed inescapably justified by the stark moral paucity of putative Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. Those modernist Hindus who did not parrot Christian detestation of the Kṛṣṇa cult instead tried to lyrically justify it with sentiment and imagery that did nought to dissuade its detractors. Further pinched by British slurs of Hindu effeminacy, reformists undertook to portray their religion as heroic and philosophically profound.

From a sociological perspective, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī may seem to be a relatively minor player coming at the tail-end of a process set in motion by Rāmmohan Roy and others for establishing a rational neo-Hinduism relevant to the present world. Yet Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's emphasis being clearly spiritual and philosophical rather than social, his endeavor was on an entirely different basis than that of the neo-Hindu idealists who, themselves being deluded, had no power to free anyone from illusion.

Most Western-oriented intellectuals were shocked that the modern-educated Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was employing his scholarship in defending what they spurned as outmoded Hinduism, and moreover that he championed the cult of Lord Caitanya, for learned Hindus generally regarded impersonalistic lucubrations on Vedānta as the apex of Vedic thought, and particularly in Bengal, *paṇḍitas* tended to sneer at Vaiṣṇava dharma as suitable only for the illiterate masses. Despite its elaborate philosophical heritage, many secular scholars deemed Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma to be, at best, pure sentimentality. They were seemingly unaware that it comprised any theology whatsoever, other than what they rejected as being absurd metaphysical fantasizing on the bucolic frolics of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Nothing had been done to address these misconceptions until Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura took Vaiṣṇava dharma out of its otherworldly

cocoon by illustrating its pragmatic relevance to contemporary man and its ability to dialectically uphold itself among established credos and doctrines.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura continued Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's initiative and expanded it exponentially. He presented Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Absolute Truth, and *śuddha-bhakti* as above all mundane categories of religion, whether conceived as Hinduism, Christianity, or otherwise. He maintained that *bhakti* is not a dharma for cowards, eunuchs, or frail women, nor either a manifestation of lazy men's laziness, a hackneyed opinion that obstructs the welfare of mankind, the foolishness of a pack of fools, a mere display of emotion, the mentality of a purchased slave, some ineffectual response to real-world troubles, a rambling speculative philosophy, nor meaningless cryptic riddles.[*] Rather, it is the only and elemental source of auspiciousness in the world, for by enabling all *jīvas* to rediscover the best use of their minute independence, it is the sole solution to their deepest problems. And by remarkably combining the highest benefit for both the individual and society at large, it is the exclusive prescription for real universal love.[2]

Recognizing the vulnerability of Hinduism before the onslaught of Western paradigms, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura maintained that this was because Hindus had strayed far from the original Vedic message, and thus he strived to demonstrate the teachings of Lord Caitanya as the zenith, not the nadir, of the glorious Vedic mission.

> Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's prescription is far superior to the slim improvement of the state of the lower castes as proposed by modern social reformers; nay, it far excels even the impartial equality taught in the *Gītā*. The proposal of worldly-minded moralists for slightly raising the status of the lower stratum of society has various hidden purposes—political objectives, personal interests, desire for fame, and other such ends. These subordinate principles underlying attempts to uplift the lower castes are extremely worldly in nature and clearly betray the instigators' hypocrisy.[3]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's endeavor was not to raise the social or moral condition of the downtrodden, nor did he wish to institute false egalitarianism as an alternative to caste-ism. Rather, he saw all persons bereft of Hari-*bhakti* as fundamentally indigent, and thus sought to elevate the spiritual condition of the whole human society, even of those who deemed themselves redeemers of others. In opposition to prevailing socio-religious currents aimed at synthesis of occidental and oriental thought, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, although willing and quite competent to make adjustments to modern life and to address in their own terms Westerners and the issues they raised, accepted nothing doctrinal from occidental or other systems of thought, but cleaved to the path given by *śāstra* and the *ācāryas*.

The Gauḍīya Maṭha was a redefinition yet reaffirmation of tradition, which to varying degrees the quasi-spiritual groups produced of the Bengali Renaissance shunned or repudiated. Although those who considered themselves orthodox Gauḍīyas accused him of spoiling their traditions, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura enacted change by going back to the traditional authorities, the *ācāryas* and Vedic literature, in contrast to the religious tinkers whose meddling subtly

undermined or even defied Vedic injunctions. And unlike the progressives whose assertions of their Indian-ness either implicitly or overtly lent weight to the nationalist cause, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had no interest in upsetting the political status quo. His revolution was so profound and radical that it rendered mere social adjustments inconsequential. His was a revolution of consciousness that transcended social considerations by exhorting all—whether rich or poor, privileged or deprived, educated or illiterate, ruler or ruled—to discard the mentality of being the enjoyer and to admit the reality of being eternally an object of Kṛṣṇa's enjoyment.

Yet, like any reformer enlightened or otherwise, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī responded to trends and challenges within the society and culture that he ministered to. Thus, although he expounded unadulterated truth distinguished from mundane Hinduism and criticized those supposed Hindu revivalist movements that actually derailed Vedic dharma, some of his innovations seemed to parallel those of well-known reformers contemporary or just antecedent to him.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura wanted not only to transform inaptly named Hinduism, but to impart Vaiṣṇava dharma as the highest universal truth. But to do so he first had to address the state of existing Vaiṣṇava society. Perceiving the old orthodoxy as a hopelessly corrupt and fossilized parody of Caitanya Mahāprabhu's actual movement, impossible to rectify from within, he broke away by introducing new social and ecclesiastic systems within Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma, and also a previously unformulated structure of guru-*paramparā.* He campaigned at least as much against misrepresentations of *bhakti* as against gross materialism, and like an expert physician's treating the fundamental cause rather than the symptoms of disease, sought to correct the philosophical misconceptions underlying sinfulness and religious deviation, rather than highlight their overt manifestations.

Many Britishers and progressive Hindu intellectuals had criticized *brāhmaṇas* and renunciants as parasites maintained by society although contributing little or nothing in return. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī echoed such claims in his reproof both of caste *brāhmaṇas* and those Vaiṣṇava *bābājīs* who lived practically like householders while maintaining the trappings of the renounced order and enjoying its attendant privileges. Accordingly, he initiated a new cadre of monks—a new Vaiṣṇava social order—by reestablishing *sannyāsa* within Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. *Sannyāsa* had been current in the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* at the time of Lord Caitanya, Himself a sannyasi, but later was discontinued and among Bengalis was identified mainly with Māyāvādīs. Similarly, by introducing the principle of *bhāgavata-paramparā,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī stressed vitality over formality in preceptorial lines and simultaneously undercut the syndicate of the caste Goswamis.[*] By founding the Gauḍīya Maṭha, he created within Bengali Vaiṣṇavism a new institutional system apropos to the modern age and geared for widespread preaching—systematically structured and centrally administered, in contrast to the rather amorphous makeup of most traditional Gauḍīya groups.[4]

Two

Preaching to the Intelligentsia

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu had said:

> *dīnere adhika dayā kare bhagavān*
> *kulīna, paṇḍita, dhanīra baḍa abhimāna*
>
> The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is particularly merciful to the humble and downtrodden. But aristocrats, learned scholars, and the wealthy tend to be greatly proud. (Cc 3.4.68)

Lord Caitanya's original inner followers were (from external vision) mostly upper caste, and Nityānanda Prabhu, apart from his celebrated upliftment of the most fallen, was also active among the *suvarṇa-vaṇik* (gold merchant) community. But because most Vaiṣṇavas in Bengal and Orissa were from the lowest classes, Vaiṣṇava dharma had come to be considered a beggar's religion, the resort of the *choṭa-loka* (a disparaging term for the poor, low-class, or vulgar).* Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and others of his generation had revived *bhakti* among the *bhadra-loka,* who prided themselves on their learning, culture, and sophistication, and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī continued that lead by concentrating his propaganda efforts on the rich, learned, and masterful, thus abundantly bestowing Lord Caitanya's mercy on them.

The majority of traditional Vaiṣṇavas were uneducated, unphilosophical, and nauseatingly sentimental, and thus inappropriate recipients for Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's highly erudite delivery. Moreover, being swamped by *sahajiyā* influence, they were very difficult to rectify. But intellectuals and persons of patrician disposition were naturally attracted to him, and he reciprocated by delivering Hari-*kathā* to them in a highly erudite manner, in Maṭhas furnished according to their taste, and by treating them concordantly to the behavioral standards they had imbibed. Visitors to any Gauḍīya Maṭha who were dressed in the English attire of coat, shirt, and pants that bespoke their social stature would be offered a chair and fanned by a young *brahmacārī.* Traditional practice in temples is to sit cross-legged on the floor, and common pious Hindus could not imagine sitting on the same level rather than at the feet of a sadhu, or being served by even an adolescent sadhu; yet taking into account the different outlook and sense of dignity of respectable men, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī made this adjustment so that visitors could hear and be benefited, rather than attempting to foist unnecessary strictures upon them.

He once revealed: “I want only a good audience of cultured persons. I am very eager to distribute to the public my feelings about Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti.* That is my only hankering. I want nothing else in this world—no gorgeous arrangement for personal comfort.” And on another occasion: “Just as Lord Caitanya met proponents of various paths and established *bhāgavata-dharma* by answering their innumerable questions, in current times so many opponents of His

teachings bring forth all kinds of new challenges; hence I am obliged to give solutions in a manner faithful to that employed by Mahāprabhu." He would express the aspiration: "When high-court judges wear Gauḍīya *tilaka* in the courtroom, then our preaching can be considered somewhat developed."

But convincing the educated was not easy. Persons enamored of their own intelligence were the least likely to submit to the message of Godhead, and it was not uncommon for such pompous intellectuals to openly confront Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who was always ready to reply point by point, anatomizing the erroneous claims of adversaries. To those with faith in *śāstra,* he supplied profuse *śāstrīya* evidence to endorse his position, and to those who swore by logic and reason, he offered overwhelming arguments predicated on logic and reason, which led to the same conclusion. Among the modernized intellectuals he encountered, the more honest were much thankful that in presenting Hari-*kathā* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was not limited to traditional *śāstrīya* themes, but was prepared to and extraordinarily capable of addressing all aspects of life and every societal issue.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī did not hesitate to correct respectable scholars, even for inaptly praising him. When complimented by Fr. Johanns, S.J., the principal professor of philosophy at St. Xavier's College in Calcutta, for propounding "an exceedingly high philosophy," Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī pointed out that those truths were neither part of nor comparable to the philosophies of this world, for they were *adhokṣaja,* surpassing the gamut of mundane experiential knowledge. Later in the conversation, when Fr. Johanns expressed appreciation of his ideas, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī clarified that he was speaking not of ideas, but of reality.

During that era empiricism—or more specifically, logical positivism—was the prevailing worldview among Western intellectuals and their overseas lackeys. By the influence of scientific pragmatism, the empiricism and rationalism that in the West had long been pitted against each other had become imperceptibly syncretized into a largely atheistic amalgam, its adherents bumptiously convinced that knowledge is attainable solely through cognitive faculties and that to even consider anything beyond is mere poppycock fit only for ignoramuses. In unprecedented counteraction, wholly against the grain of contemporary trends in thought, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī repeatedly spoke and wrote against the fallacies inherent in materialistic methods for acquiring and evaluating knowledge, for such epistemic systems subverted the very bedrock of Vedic spiritual culture, namely hearing submissively from authorities about *adhokṣaja,* the Absolute Truth who is beyond the range of limited conceptual processes. From the onset he would hack the roots of the suppositionally rational and empirical approaches by asserting that mundane sense perception and reasoning are ineffectual for comprehending supramundane realism; thus it is nonsense to decry transcendence with the measuring stick of one's intellect.

Unequivocally stating, "Whatever the empiricists have given is of no benefit to the world," Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura denounced both the ubiquitous conviction that the secular scientific

method was heralding progress for the human race, and the concomitant pimping of the mundane scientific outlook spawned of the urge to explain phenomena without recourse to God.[1] He cited Nikola Tesla as an example of an inventor whose discoveries had helped keep the spiritual planets undiscovered.[*] And he deemed that for all their pride in bringing civilization to new heights, the "so-called intelligentsia" was caught up in expanding "animalism."[2]

Although not enamored by modern science, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was not against it per se. By applying the principle of *yukta-vairāgya,* he employed technological developments for disseminating Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti* and for opposing both the atheistic mentality wedded to the ongoing scientific method and also the limiting ontology of empiricism, particularly its far-fetched claims to be able to describe reality in toto. He averred:

> The modern way of thinking increases consciousness of "I am the doer" as per *prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni.*[*] It is difficult for persons steeped in this mode of thought to see things as they actually are. Considering themselves learned, they presume to know a lot and understand everything, but because they are acquainted only with the exoteric, they cannot decipher the esoteric principle.[3]

Like a magnifying glass, which by focusing sunlight on a particular point burns even hotter than the sun, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's words beamed the essence of *śāstra* onto specific misconceptions and reduced them to ashes. Upon encountering the fire of his divine locution, many haughty persons intoxicated with the bravado of worldly knowledge soon exhausted their reserves of contumelies, egotism, perverse judgment, and malice and thereupon were able to realize the worthlessness of their brittle litanies. All challengers were defeated by his thorough grasp of the principles underlying Gauḍīya philosophy and its application in all situations. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura specialized in transforming cocky skeptics into resolute admirers by dint of his nonpareil intelligence and polymathy. None could stand before him. Many became astounded and captivated by his unassailable genius. A typical response was that of some scholars from Dacca, headed by Professor Rameśa-candra Catuṣṭīrtha of the Śakti Auṣadhālaya Catuṣpāṭhī: "Previously we were unaware that there are such amazing *siddhāntas* in Vaiṣṇava philosophy or such a keenly intelligent *ācārya* among the Vaiṣṇavas. The more we listen to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's Hari-*kathā,* the more our thirst for hearing increases."[4]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was obliged to enlighten various savants that his mínistration was not merely a sanitized form of *prākṛta-sahajiyā* vulgarity but an altogether dissimilar contribution. For instance, he once expressed to Rabindranath Tagore the conviction that should Western literati be exposed to even a portion of Śrī Caitanya's message, they would eagerly accept it as a great treasure; but Tagore was mystified, for he knew of Śrī Caitanya's teachings only according to *prākṛta-sahajiyās'* widely distributed misrepresentations of *rasika* literature.[5]

Ironically, while various *prākṛta-sahajiyās* slyly evaded the Gauḍīya Maṭha by writing it off as a bunch of *jñānīs* overly inclined to dialectics and thus not at all devotees, certain mundane academics likewise tried to sidestep Gauḍīya Maṭha *paṇḍitas* by dismissing their predilection

for Hari-*bhakti* as so overwhelmingly inane as to nullify all their apparent learning and render their scholarly constructions unfit for perusal by any self-respecting bookworm.

To an elderly scholar who voiced the common claim that Lord Caitanya never engaged in argument but simply distributed *prema,* thus implying that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's contentiousness was unbefitting a Vaiṣṇava, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī retorted that although Mahāprabhu by no means entered into barren dogmatic debates, it was clear from *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* that He established His position by meaningful *śāstrīya* grapples with the most learned philosophers of the day.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's no-nonsense approach was effective. Once a man came to him objecting, "Caitanya Mahāprabhu may be considered *jagad*-guru, but not Bhagavān Himself." Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura replied with a barrage of *śāstrīya* references and soon proved him wrong—upon which the man readily surrendered as a disciple. Similarly, many other persons became convinced, or at least subdued, by the genuineness and power of the lion guru's arguments.

When a dozen university professors eager for dispute visited Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī told them, "I am prepared to answer whatever questions you ask, provided that you listen to me for at least one hour without interrupting." The scholars agreed. He then spoke for one and a half hours, quoting extensively from *śāstra* and covering the whole ambit of Vaiṣṇava philosophy, proleptically dispelling all the professors' doubts. Without having placed any queries, they departed astonished at the profundity of this unique sadhu's learning.

Although himself superlatively scholarly, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura regarded compromise with mundane scholars to be insidious poison. He never stooped to accommodate them or pander to their anti-devotional theories. For instance, although modern academics date the first Ālvārs at approximately 700 A.D., Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition maintains that the first three appeared in 4,202 B.C., and it was this classic information that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura incorporated into his biographies, with no mention of the misinformation spewed by deluded scholars.

Commenting on attempts by university scholars to describe Lord Caitanya and His devotees, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura stated that by applying conceptions of worldly *rasa,* proud pedants may acquire Ph.D.s from similarly deluded persons, yet their efforts to comprehend the transcendental by the mundane senses and intellect are like trying to accommodate an elephant on a dish.[6] He warned that *bhajana* cannot be attained by studying and analyzing according to historicism or allegorical interpretation.

One time at Saccidānanda Maṭha the district judge of Cuttack challenged Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, "Why not concentrate on uplifting persons in backward areas, such as the hills of Orissa? *Ṛṣis* and *munis* make their ashrams in forests; they live simply and do *bhajana*. Why are you here in the city with such a nice temple, complete with all comforts and facilities, better even than what the common man can afford?" Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura retorted, "We are not

bhajanānandīs. Although traditionally sadhus shun wealthy men and kings, our first duty is to approach the rich and learned. If we can convince them, then others will automatically follow. Our objective is to benefit all living beings, not just the poor. We must use all modern facilities and technological improvements to influence the educated. The time will come when all of India will follow my message. If we go to the hills for our own *bhajana,* or minister primarily to illiterates, the preaching will not be as fructuous."

But the judge persisted, "You should convert the jungle tribes to Hinduism and Vaiṣṇavism." Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī responded, "Our process is not to dictate to others or forcibly convert them, nor to turn Christians into Hindus or vice versa, but to give information about the soul. *Jīvera 'svarūpa' haya—kṛṣṇera 'nitya-dāsa':* 'Every living being is eternally the servant of the Supreme Lord.'[7] We are concerned with the soul, not sectarian religious dogma." The judge then argued, "So if all are equally sons of God, why do you mix primarily with intellectuals?" Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī answered, "If we go primarily among the ordinary public, others will think, 'This is *choṭa-lokera-dharma* (dharma for the less important).' Better that we try to convince leaders, for if they accept it then others will automatically follow:

> *yad yad ācarati śreṣṭhas tat tad evetaro janaḥ*
> *sa yat pramāṇaṁ kurute lokas tad anuvartate*
>
> Whatever action a great man performs, common men follow. And whatever standards he sets by exemplary acts, all the world pursues." (Bg 3.21)[8]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was similarly petitioned by Dr. Sunīti Kumāra Chattopādhyāya, a Calcutta University professor and editor of the Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣad's magazine, and the Nadia District magistrate Mr. T.C. Rāya, who together had come to see Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha and to meet him. After discussing various topics, they proposed that if Gauḍīya Maṭha devotees were to preach less among the elite and more among the struggling lower classes and non-Hindus, then the number of Hindus would increase, which would be highly beneficial for Hindu society. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī replied:

> In *ātma-dharma* (the intrinsic function of the soul), there is no latitude for such materialistic perspectives as rich or poor, educated or uneducated. The person who is the subject of *ātma-dharma* is the *ātmā* (soul), who is neither rich nor poor, educated nor uneducated. What transpires in the name of increasing the number of Hindus or non-Hindus only causes mutual rivalry, competition, fighting, envy, sectarian narrow-mindedness, and proliferation of bogus religious cults, and is all speculation that leads human society on the path to destruction. Let all so-called universal welfare activities remain far away, as they are meant simply for welcoming terrible disasters and dangers.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura often met scholars and addressed meetings in their homes, and being eager to impress Gauḍīya teachings upon students, he occasionally lectured in educational institutions. At Ravenshaw College, in Cuttack, a student challenged, "You are sectarian, not

udāra (liberal, or generous to all), because you hardly mix with the poor and downtrodden." Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura fired back, "Are you *udāra*? Are you generous to all? If so, you should accept us instead of criticizing us."

Quoting from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's poem "Vaiṣṇava Ke?" *kāminīr kāma nahe tava dhāma/ tāhāra-mālika kevala 'yādava'* (Lust for women is not meant for you—Kṛṣṇa alone is the proprietor of all women), one gentleman asked, "What do you mean that women can be enjoyed only by Kṛṣṇa? Can no one else enjoy them?" In reply, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī explained the reality that all enjoyment is meant exclusively for Kṛṣṇa.

To another gentleman, who protested the forthrightness of the displays and of the preaching at a Theistic Exhibition, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura stated that their purpose was not to insult but to edify. That man retorted, "Do you want to convert me?" "Yes," responded Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. "We require not more than five minutes to convert you. You need only give proper attention. When you perceive that my message propounds your own deepest interest and inner necessity, then automatically you will convert. It is because of this that even though I began alone, now five hundred men are speaking on my behalf."

Three

Preaching to the World

pṛthivīte āche yata nagarādi grāma
sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma

In every town and village on earth My name will be proclaimed. (Cb 3.4.126)

For centuries, to most Bengali Vaiṣṇavas this prediction by Lord Caitanya had seemed hardly more than rhapsodic poesy, until Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura roused the intellectual circles that he moved in by pointing to its imminent actualization. Although *Gauḍīya* literally means "of Bengal," the mantle fell on Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī (who often quoted this verse) to take the teachings of the supremely munificent avatar, Gauḍīyanātha Gaurāṅga, outside the confines of Gauḍa-*deśa,* beyond the shores of Bhārata, and to every *jīva* on every planet of the universe.

He was preaching during the raj period, when there was little indication that the mighty West would ever take any interest in Oriental culture other than to overrun and convert it. Hindus, who had deemed their hoary civilization axiomatically paramount, were now dominated by a race whose members considered themselves at the acme of human development and mocked Hindu notions of purity, wantonly eating meat and consuming alcohol with little concern for the sentiments of their vassals. Confidently Christian and patronizingly colonialist, the British adjudged themselves natural rulers of the East, considering it their God-given duty to govern and baptize the brown man. Westerners scorned Indian culture as a pointless conglomeration of rituals hardly comparable to pre-Christian paganism, and maintained that, being so miserably numb-headed, Asians could never rise to European standards of refinement or be truly civilized, so for their own good should just accept their divinely ordained role as grovelers at the Briton's boots.[*]

Yet Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī perceived simmering disquiet beneath the jingoistic veneer. Although unmatched, British ascendancy had never gone unchallenged and was becoming ever more precarious. In the wake of the Great War the global situation remained tense. The seething discontent of the postwar years fuelled the growth of bolshevism and fascism as contending powers in Europe. World politics, itself a recent phenomenon, was thus becoming dominated by a hateful and murderous struggle for supremacy. The ominous clouds hovering over Europe threatened to spit forth a deluge that would engulf the entire planet, as further mass hostilities seemed increasingly inevitable. A September 1934 *Harmonist* article titled "World Turmoil" began, "No one believes that war can be avoided. It is just a matter of time." The world, engrossed in its immediate tribulations, had little thought of worlds beyond. Hence Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī exhorted the West to reassess its policy of expansionism and subjugation:

> The West is proud of its civilization. It is anxious for conferring the boon of its advanced civilization on the nations of the world. But it is not yet altogether confident of the success of such a laudable mission. It has always been distrustful of the capacity of the nations for assimilating the best of the proffered civilization. But is Western civilization itself a source of unmixed satisfaction for those who are its proud original possessors? They indeed possess superior material force. They are disposed to think that their superiority in brute force is evidence of their superior spiritual condition. The only answer to this terrible self-deception is being supplied by the recent never-ending crises of the affairs of the world that have been the outcome of their short-sighted handling by the self-conceited dominating temperament engendered in all modern peoples by their utter neglect of the spiritual issue.[1]*

Despite the lack of overt signs of Western regard for Kṛṣṇa consciousness, like Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura before him Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was convinced that it would soon spread worldwide. He often spoke and wrote of an imminent international flowering of the *bhakti* movement:

> The Lord desires His word to be preached to all living beings. The *Harmonist* stands for this desire. She cherishes the faith that a day will come when His word will be preached everywhere all over the world through the medium of all the languages, including the language of animals and plants, when this will be practicable. She believes that Gaurasundara will in the fullness of time raise up fit preachers in every part of the world, and in numbers amply sufficient for His purpose.[2]

> Waves of pure devotion from the East should go to the West to teach pure theism, or unalloyed devotion to the Absolute Person.[3]

> That day is not far distant when the priceless volumes penned by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda will be reverently translated, by the recipients of his grace, into all the languages of the world.[4]

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had stated in a *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* article that open-minded intellectuals of the West would welcome the Gauḍīya message if presented in the systematic way that they were accustomed to and respected, and in *Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta* and *Jaiva Dharma* he had analytically established the superiority of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's method in a manner that unbiased persons could not fail to appreciate.* Therefore Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura particularly wanted that these two books be published in various languages for the perusal of the world intelligentsia.

He said that Jagannātha should go throughout the *jagat,* and recommended that deities of Lord Jagannātha be established outside of India, since Jagannātha is especially kind to the fallen. His vision of worldwide preaching was encapsulated in the conclusion of his last essay featured in the *Gauḍīya* before his passing away:

> We request all to join us in praying for Gaurasundara's mercy so that the Gauḍīya teachings will soon spread to America. By His mercy this theme is already being discussed in Europe, especially London, so why should America be left out? *Pṛthivīte yata kathā dharma nāma cale, bhāgavata kahe tāhā paripūrṇa chale.*[*] Let this saying be an indicator of the impartial dharma for all humankind. May *Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta* and *Jaiva Dharma* become worshipable by the world's wise and judicious. Taking the victory flag of impartial dharma, let them know Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, *śrī-harināma,* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to be one and the same. May the continuous hearing and chanting of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and its ancillary literature be cultivated by Gauḍīya devotees and all inhabitants of the universe. May the fog of misconceptions be automatically dispelled far from everyone's heart, by the rays descending from the *Bhāgavatārka-marīci-mālā.*[5][*]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī foresaw that Caitanya Mahāprabhu's benediction would travel like the sun from East to West. He stated, "I am endeavoring for Lord Caitanya's message to gradually spread all over the cosmos. Before long, five million persons will come to propagate His teachings in every corner of the universe."[6]

That Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was willing and even eager to preach to Westerners was revolutionary. Bibulous and beef-eating, Westerners were considered outcastes and untouchable, and even to see them was polluting. Hitherto, most sadhus had spurned both Westerners and their innovations brought to India. Having protectively withdrawn from the world, they were apathetic toward the phenomenal changes it was undergoing, remaining content with the timeless practices of saintly persons. But in this ethos of change, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura discerned an opportunity to alter the very course of the world by bringing about the intrinsic change of heart that was *śuddha-bhakti,* thus steering mankind away from both the dynamic materialism of contemporary life and the more pious but deliberate avoidance of Kṛṣṇa that was endemic in traditional Hindu culture. Yet to effect such wholesale reform would be possible only by energetic, focused, and pragmatic propagation. Thus Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's mission was to preach by whatever means practicable, including use of the latest Western media technology for broadcasting Gauḍīya *siddhānta.*

Not content with the considerable expansion of his movement in India, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura wanted to bring the message of Lord Caitanya beyond the traditional homeland of Vedic culture, to every home and heart in the world. He saw that Indians did not appreciate the unprecedented gifts of Caitanya Mahāprabhu and were becoming increasingly sucked into a vortex of fascination with everything European. He respected Westerners as being in many ways cultured and intelligent and concluded that should they take to Mahāprabhu's path, the rest of the planet would certainly follow. His extraordinary vision for presenting Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the West, when even Indians seemed to be largely uninterested in it, was based on the conviction that Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti* is the intrinsic propensity of the soul, thus meant for, and to be communicated and practiced in, all times, places, and circumstances.

As described by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda:

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu requested that those who have taken birth as human beings in India should first of all make their lives perfect and then distribute this knowledge. This is Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission. He simply said it, but He was expecting that in later days His followers would do that. So that attempt was made by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura desired that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's message be accepted by East and West equally and that the Indians, Europeans, and Americans should dance together in the ecstasy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mercy. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura simply expressed the desire, "When shall I see this happening, that the Eastern and Western people are united on the basis of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's cult and dancing together in ecstasy?" That was the ambition of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the ambition of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. And Śrī Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura took up this affair.

So every disciple, especially those who were competent, he requested them, "You take up this mission of Caitanya Mahāprabhu and preach in the Western countries." That was Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's first attempt. Before that, even the *ācāryas, rūpānuga* Gosvāmīs, they left literature but did not attempt to preach practically. And Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, he was very, very anxious to preach this Caitanya cult in the Western countries. This is Śrī Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's special contribution.[7]

And:

Sannyasis generally stay in mountain caves, but you, O master [Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura], keep your sannyasis in marble mansions. Caitanya Mahāprabhu declared that simply to see a worldly person is equivalent to taking poison. But you willingly meet Lords and Englishmen. *Mlecchas* and *yavanas* are forbidden in Hindu temples, but you, my lord, seat them as chairmen in the assembly of devotees. Hindus are not allowed to cross the ocean, but you send your devotees overseas to preach. In the cities of Kali-yuga the instructions of bona fide spiritual preceptors are "forbidden"; still, you remain there in any way possible.

The devotees want to hide in a secluded place to perform *nirjana-bhajana*. But you do not accept this in your judgment. You see thickly-populated places as arenas for the preaching work. In London you want a student hostel. You explain that it must be first-class. In the land of barbarians, a student hostel for Hari-*kathā*! Who can understand the significance of these matters?[8]

Four

Preaching to Westerners in India

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was eager to preach to Western intellectual and administrative leaders in India. Whenever Westerners visited his Maṭhas, he gave them special attention and wanted that they be decorously welcomed and hosted. For instance, he instructed the young boy Jati Śekhara to attend an Australian visitor to the Puruṣottama Maṭha: "Serve him. Offer him water and *mahā-prasāda*. See that no disturbance is caused to him."

When receiving foreign dignitaries, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would have some members of his retinue dressed in an Occidental-cum-Oriental mode preferred by many Western-leaning Indians, featuring medium-length black cassocks worn over narrow trousers plus Western-style leather shoes—"booted and suited," as it was known in Bengal. He did not go to meet Western scholars, but as his reputation as an extraordinarily lucid and erudite exponent of religious philosophy spread, several came to discuss with him. Among them were Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld, from Berlin; Professor Albert E. Suthers, occupant of the chair of Comparative Religion and Philosophy at Ohio University (who remained at Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha for about a month associating with Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura); Professor Nixon, of Oxford University; and Dr. Stella Kramrisch, of Calcutta University.*

Some Western scholars approached Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī out of intellectual curiosity, presuming non-whites incapable of higher thought. Yet he was not even slightly inhibited by the imagined cultural supremacy of Westerners, for with the eye of transcendence he saw the apparent progress of European civilization as just another phase of *māyā,* and that Kṛṣṇa consciousness with its integral Vedic culture is the eternal and primary necessity of human society. He would try to impress upon them that they were neither Westerners nor rulers, for such were temporary designations, and that the only truly dignified position, the eternal birthright of all, is to be a servant of Kṛṣṇa's servants. Never flinching at Westerners' dialectic probing, he met them on their own ground, complementing his conviction in *śāstra's* inerrancy with his inspired ability to present its message in a manner comprehensible to persons who regarded themselves of rational disposition. He bombarded intellectual visitors with his encyclopedic knowledge of both modern and traditional thought, and pummeled them with the realized conclusions of the *ācāryas,* propounded not dogmatically but with impregnable reasoning, demonstrating that Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism reveals truths unimaginable to the mere pedant. Those xenophobes who prided themselves on being natural repositories of learning, philosophy, morals, culture, and God's grace, who took as self-evident the inherent goodness of the white man and the need "to wash the heathen in the blood of the lamb," inevitably had their arguments toppled and their chauvinistic hubris mangled by the transcendental genius of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, and became compelled to admit the unthinkable—that they had something to learn from the East.

Like Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura before him, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was confident of capturing Western minds by offering them a systematic philosophical approach and concepts beyond their present range of thought. But first he had to overcome prejudices and stock accusations against aspects of Vedic culture that Westerners considered heretical, absurd, or otherwise indefensible, such as Kṛṣṇa's "immorality," gods with bestial forms, polytheism, and the practice of sati. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was the only one capable of answering such allegations, which he did with an indomitable ratiocination that silenced even the hardest skeptics.

Five

Preaching in the West

With Professor Sanyal's English *Sree Krishna Chaitanya* published on Gaura-*pūrṇimā* 1933, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī adjudged that the time had come for propagating Mahāprabhu's message in Europe. And on 10 April his dream finally came true when Śrīmad Bhakti Pradīpa Tīrtha Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhakti Hṛdaya Bon Mahārāja, and Saṁvidānanda Prabhu set off by ship from Bombay for London. Śrīmad B.P. Tīrtha Mahārāja was naturally pleasing by his winsome and devotional manner, and being elder and staid was deemed immune to the jeopardy of Western influence; Śrīmad Bon Mahārāja was young, sprightly, and a dazzling orator; and Saṁvidānanda Prabhu was to pursue a Ph.D.[*] That missionaries from the "heathen" East were journeying to the heart of the Empire to teach their Christian rulers about God, underlined the ambition and scope of the Gauḍīya Mission and geometrically enhanced its prestige among the astonished Indian public.

During a Hari-*kathā* in 1932 Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had voiced his aspiration and expectation for this difficult undertaking:

> Western savants may to some extent appreciate Lakṣmī and Sītādevī, but it will take them much time to even begin to understand Śrī Rādhā. Taking the shoes of Rūpa and Sanātana on our heads, we are sending men to the West in hope of finding one genuine person through whom the Western world might some day or other be able to realize Mahāprabhu's teachings and the elevated nature of worship of Śrī Rādhā-Govinda.[1]

In a valedictory given on 18 March on the occasion of the departure from Calcutta of his overseas emissaries, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī expressed his profound hope for their seemingly impossible success. He briefed them on how they could accomplish their task—by being pure and humble devotees, untainted by material attachment:

> The happy day has come when we are destined to spread the teachings of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu to distant corners of the earth. The spiritual service that we are dedicated to has passed the bud stage and is now a full-blown flower, whose aroma we must carry across the seas with the same willingness that characterized Śrī Hanumān when he leapt over the wide ocean with Śrī Rāma's message. This extension of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's spiritual gift to foreign countries is our humble offering at His feet.
>
> The words of instruction by Śrī Gaurasundara are verily His beautiful body, the preachers of His word through the ages are His secondary limbs, His teaching is His potent weapon, and the grace of Śrī Hari Himself, established in Śrī Caitanya's words, is His eternal associate. Ergo, for truly presenting Śrī Gaurasundara, the Lord of the Gauḍīyas, to the aliens, I am addressing these few words to the preachers about to proceed to countries beyond India.

We find the following great precepts (*mahā-vākyas*) in the body of teachings vouchsafed to us by the supreme master of all masters: "The constant chanting of Hari-*kīrtana,* by being far more humble than a blade of grass and as forbearing as a tree, by seeking no honor for oneself, and by offering due honor to all entities, is the highest natural function of the unalloyed *jīvas*." The lotus feet of my *śrī-gurudeva* attracted me to his service, he being the manifest form of these four great precepts. My friends will be in a position to attract all souls of the world to the footstool of real truth by purchasing the same unfailing method.

The crest jewel of the order of sannyasis of the triple-staff, Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī Gosvāmīpāda, has in the following words taught the same process to those who assume the triple-staff of renunciation: "I say this while holding a straw between my teeth, falling at your feet, and uttering hundreds of the humblest entreaties: 'All you good souls, throwing everything off to a distance, practice love for the feet of Śrī Caitanya, who is so surpassingly beautiful.'" Following in the footsteps of all former devotees, I am entreating them to pursue this identical method of propaganda.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya-deva is the supreme teacher of all teachers of this world and the ideal possessor of highest intelligence. Our only duty should be to constantly chant those words regarding cleansing the mirror of the heart, which He speaks in His eight precepts (*Śikṣāṣṭaka*). We are only the bearers of the transcendental word. We shall never hesitate to offer all persons of this world every honor and facility they deserve. We must pray to all for the boon of aptitude for service to Kṛṣṇa, and without slackening our loving service to the Lord of our hearts, we should offer due honor to all persons.

As we approach different persons in all parts of the world with the vendor's bag of discourses about Hari, we will have opportunities to see ample sights, hear much, and derive much benefit from our experience. May we never forget that all entities of this world are essentially protīgīs of the lotus feet of *śrī*-guru for helping to expand his service. May we always remember that they are excellent only if prepared to attend with utmost eagerness a particle of dust from the lotus feet of my *śrī*-guru, and that otherwise they are merely a mirage devised by the deluding potency for our ruin. I wish to remind those friends of mine about to journey to the West for preaching the words of Śrī Caitanya, of the two precepts of my master Śrī Rūpa: (1) "The proper mode of renunciation is ceaseless endeavor to cultivate a relationship with Kṛṣṇa and, being free from all mundane affinity, to employ objects of this world in pursuance of that purpose"; (2) "The abnegation, by persons desiring liberation, of objects that have an affinity with Hari, considering them mundane, is termed renunciation of little actual value."

I request my friends: by giving due honor to all persons, in your preaching follow the ideal of Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī Prabhu in his exposition of the aphorism of the *Vedānta*—to wit, "From transcendental sound comes the cessation of further mundane birth"—in the section "Result to be Achieved," as found in such verses as "All glory to the bliss of the name of

Murāri.”*

Those nations that you are going to for propagating the chant of Hari are mounted on the summit of proficiency in all affairs of this world. They are practiced in excercising rational judgment, endowed with good manners, and superior and glorious in many respects. Therefore we should maintain our hope unshaken that they will prove to be the worthiest recipients of transcendental sound if we simply unlock for them the gates of the natural exhibition of abiding argument and enduring judgment. If we unpack our baggage of genuine discourses of Hari and rely on the quality of forbearance, it will certainly receive the garland of welcome from the hearts of nations gifted with keen intelligence.

In undertaking this propaganda we have not been actuated by any attempt at rivalry or hostility—this should be borne in mind. We should call at each truth-seeker's door, bearing on our heads the baggage of real truth to be offered. It is not our business to be elated by anyone's praise or discouraged by neglect. We must always be alive to our duty to enhance our master's pleasure by serving him with perfect sincerity.

We must not view the world with a mentality depressed by a sense of deficiency, poverty, or otherwise, or by any person's display of worldly erudition, rank, or so on. That is the state of forgetfulness of our real selves. In the context of this world, all persons of it are actually in every way superior to us. We should not covet any commodities therein. We are merely triple-staff renunciant supplicants devoted to chanting the words of Śrī Caitanya. We have no desirable object higher than the pleasure of serving Hari-guru-Vaiṣṇavas.

We must always bear in mind that we are not the operators of instruments, but merely instruments. The triple-staff *bhikṣus* are Śrī Caitanya's living *mṛdaṅgas.* We must constantly offer our music at the lotus feet of *śrī*-guru. We should practice the function of the *parivrājaka* (peripatetic preacher) of carrying aloft the victory banner of Śrī Gaurasundara's divine commands, by perpetual submission to *śrī*-guru and the Vaiṣṇavas, fixing our eye on the polestar of the heard transcendental voice. We must always be mindful that we have been initiated into the vow of the *parivrājaka* for the sole purpose of promulgating the heart's desire of *śrī*-guru and Śrī Gaurāṅga. If in that duty under the guidance of *śrī*-guru we are ever inspired to discourse about the truth, then no hankering for travel, or any veiled form of desire other than chanting of *harināma,* will ever strike terror into our hearts.

The avowed service to Gaura-*nāma,* Gaura-*dhāma,* and Gaura-*kāma* is our only eternal function. We are *bhikṣus* of the triple-staff. The in-gathering of the smallest alms, such as is collected by bees, is our only means for serving throughout the world the manifestation of the divine form of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha. We are neither enjoyers nor abnegators of mundane objects. We recognize as our highest objective the desire for carrying with veneration the shoes of the order of *paramahaṁsas.*

> Our only duty will be to proclaim to all that complete reliance on the transcendental Absolute Truth is by far the highest form of freedom, infinitely superior to the partially independent mastery over the pervertedly reflected forms of this mundane world.[*] By holding straw between our teeth in supplication, we shall carry aloft to all persons the banner of genuine freedom. We should forever be engaged in chanting the exhilarating name of Śrī Hari, by adopting as our fundamental enlightening principle that the highest path is submission as endorsed by Śrī Rūpa, and with the further exhortation to cherish the unwavering faith that he will protect us.[2]

Another speaker at the sendoff ceremony, Calcutta University professor Dr. Pañcānana Neogi, stated that hitherto Śaṅkara's theory had been preached by Indians in Europe and America as being the religion of India, but now for the first time pure Vaiṣṇava thought was about to be presented before the peoples of the West by a proper agency.[3]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī often gave an analogy indicating the spirit required for preaching in foreign countries: if the house of a person living abroad catches fire, somehow or other he will communicate the emergency to others even if he does not know the local language; similarly, understanding its urgency, a devotee will deliver the teachings of Kṛṣṇa consciousness by any means possible. Thus Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī permitted the London-bound missionaries to make adjustments in their dress and certain aspects of their behavior and presentation, yet not compromise their message. They were not to propound Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti* as what Westerners were sure to presume it to be—mere Hinduism—nor introduce themselves as Hindus or *brāhmaṇas,* but as Vaiṣṇava-*dāsānudāsa,* servants of the servants of Viṣṇu. He instructed them not to present *bhakti* in a simply academic manner describing Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Lord Kṛṣṇa as historical figures or ordinary men, but to establish its transcendental basis and give a vision of the path back to Godhead. This approach was exhaustively emphasized in *Sree Krishna Chaitanya,* copies of which the Western preachers carried for distribution.

They also brought letters of introduction from the viceroy of India, the governors of the four vast provinces—Bengal, Bombay, Madras, and United Provinces—and other leaders of the Raj, requesting the Secretary of State for India and also other prominent figures to help the Mission in England. These endorsements proved important in assuring the non-political intentions of the Gauḍīya preachers and afforded them access to the highest notches of British society.

Under the heading "Gauḍīya Maṭha Propaganda in Europe," the June 1933 *Harmonist* featured extracts of letters from London in which the newly arrived emissaries conveyed their first impressions of and activities in the capital of the mighty empire:

Letter of Tridaṇḍī Svāmī B.P. Tīrtha of 26-4-33

> We reached Dover at 6:30 p.m. on 22-4-33 via Genoa. Victoria station, London, was reached by an hour-and-a-half journey from Dover. We bowed down our heads to the

lotus feet of Śrī Gurudeva on alighting at the Victoria Station. Tridaṇḍī Svāmī B.H. Bon at once sent a wire of our safe arrival in London. We put up at night at the Indian Students Union Hostel, I12 Gower Street. All letters are to be addressed without the words "His Holiness."

After a good deal of search we got suitable accommodation, though not quite comfortable, on twenty-fourth evening (£ 2–10s a week) at 9 Torrington Square, London W.C.I.

On the twenty-fifth we met the secretary of the Friend's Society in London and Mr. Shastri of Madras, Sans. Mss. Antiquarian. We are handicapped for non-arrival of luggage from Genoa. Cotton clothes are of no use now. We shall have warm clothes in no time. Today is a fine sunny day, or rather a gala day for the English people, the first such day since our arrival.

Letter of Tridaṇḍī Svāmī B.H. Bon of 26-4-33

Our letters will be sent to Calcutta, as His Divine Grace's whereabouts are not known to us.

We reached London on 22-4-33 at eight in the evening. The sun sets at eight o'clock and darkness felt at eight-thirty. Indian Students Union is managed by Indian Y.M.C.A. We stayed here for two nights. We shifted to 9 Torrington Square on the twenty-fourth. We have been cooking for ourselves.

Prof. Rolan Penrose, an Englishman whom we met on the M.V. Victoria, gave us two letters for London and two for Paris. We have seen the two London gentlemen. One of them, Mr. J. Harvey Theobold, is an old man of seventy and very learned. I saw him on the twenty-fifth with Tridaṇḍī Svāmī B.P. Tīrtha at the "Friends House" of the Quakers. He introduced us to Mr. John P. Felcher, secretary, London center of the Friend's Service Council, an elderly gentleman. I talked to him for about thirty minutes. He promised to arrange some meetings for us in the Quaker's Association. All the introductions are in the big trunks that have not yet arrived. We expect them on 28-4-33. It will take fifteen days time before I may begin to meet people by appointment. It is now cold as at Ooty, but the local people say it is the hottest time of the year. Kindly ask our friends not to write "His Holiness," as both Catholic and Protestant will be offended.

Letter of Tridaṇḍī Svāmī B.H. Bon of 5-5-33

His Divine Grace's letter by airmail was received on 4-5-33. This is a land of too much formality and etiquette. Our ordinary wearing clothes are smiled at by ladies and gents on the streets. I have seen Mr. Fletcher of the Friends House. The letters from *** were very useful. Mr. F.H. Browne, C.I.E., of the Times was informed by *** of our coming to London. He received me yesterday. Mr. Frederick Grubb, an old and highly educated gentleman introduced by ***, was also awaiting our arrival in London. He will think out

in what practical way he can assist us. The editor of *Central News,* introduced by ***, has already taken up our cause; news has been sent to all papers and is circulating like fire. I have also seen the news editor of Reuter. He has shorthanded our talk with him and it will be sent down to all papers. The editor of the *Daily Express* was very much interested to talk to us. They have taken our photos and these will be out shortly. The editor of the *Manchester Guardian* wants me to wait for fifteen days for arrival of their Eastern News editor, who is now away from London. I expect to see the editors of the *Free Press of India, Morning Post, Evening News, Daily News, Evening Standard,* and others. Reporters have already begun to question me on several points. Yesterday I wrote to Sir Samuel Stewart, India Office. I shall see Samuel Hoare and Mr. Butler. On Tuesday the twenty-fifth, Tridaṇḍī Svāmī B.P. Tīrtha delivered a short speech of twenty minutes at the Indian Students Union discussion group. There were twenty Indian students and two English ladies. The lecture was quite good. It was on "The Message of the Supreme Lord." As usual in this country, questions begin to flow in torrents after the speech. I was desired by Svāmī B.P. Tīrtha to conduct the questions.

I go out at 9:00 a.m. and return at 1:00 p.m. At 3:00 p.m. I again go out and return at 8.30. Now the sun sets at 9:30; in June it will set at 10:24. We finish our dinner at 9:00 and then write letters. I go to bed at 12:00 and rise at 6:30. I read papers at night and early morning. I can chant on my beads of the holy name for sometime in the morning. Just now (5-5-33) I receive two introductory letters to Colonel Sir Francis Younghusband, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., one of the most learned religious men in the eyes of the London public, and to Sir E. Denison Ross, C.I.E., Director of School of Oriental Studies, London University.

D.L.T. received at Bombay on 7-5-33

We have invited a hundred to tea, speaking on "Gauḍīya Mission," 39, Drayton Gardens, S. Kensington, London, S.W. 10.

Letter of Tridaṇḍī Svāmī B.H. Bon to Vāsudeva Prabhu of 11-5-33

I am no more stared at on the streets. The press reporters are bent on finding out our personal life and create a story of that. They want to know what the speaker himself has realized and has to say of himself.

Letter of Tridaṇḍī Svāmī B.P. Tīrtha of 12-5-33 from Drayton Gardens

Landlord and landlady are always kind to us in teaching English etiquette and formalities whenever we express our desire to learn. Here the manner maketh a man.

Letter of Tridaṇḍī Svāmī B.H. Bon 12-5-33

39, Drayton Gardens, South Kensington, London, S.W. 10, was occupied on 10-5-33. I was invited to tea at Mr. and Mrs. Grubb's on Sunday the seventh at 4:00 p.m. Sir Alladi

Krishna Swami, Advocate General, was also one among others. We two were on the same table with Mr. Grubb our host. The same day there was a huge procession to Hyde Park of the Labour Party. Prominent members of the Parliament (Labour) spoke brilliantly. We were present there naturally with all prominence. Several came forward and we had to answer such questions as: Why do we worship trees, hills, many gods? What happens after death? What is a ghost? etc.

Lt. Colonel Seymour gave me the address where we are living. We are now exclusively alone. We are staying with Mr. and Mrs. Bellham, who are God-fearing people. Mr. Bellham is serving in the Government. I was invited to a lecture at Caxton Hall on 9-5-33 when Sir John Thompson, K.C.S.I, K.C.I.E., and the most Hon'ble the Marquess of Reading, G.C.B., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., G.C.V.O, presided. The meeting was organized by the East India Association of the Conservative Party. On the proposal of Mr. F.H. Browne, C.I.E, of the *Times,* and general secretary of the association, I have been accepted as a member. I shall be allowed to give remarks and views at the next meeting on 1 June, in the speech of the main speaker. The season in London ends in July and re-opens in October. This season is fully engaged. Mr. Brown may try to give me the earliest chance in October to be the main speaker at Caxtor Hall.

On the tenth I interviewed Sir Findlater Steward at the India Office by appointment. I had a very lively talk, most freely, for forty minutes. I told him of the religious tolerance of the British Crown and explained how a loving relationship must be maintained between the Crown and the religious people. In India in early days, the king was to protect and support religious men, who in their turn were to pray for the safety of the throne. Sir Findlater was much satisfied. He questioned me about our Mission's activities and lastly asked me what he could do for us. I asked for paying homage to Their Majesties on behalf of the mission, and to Parliament and the Prince of Wales, to deliver lectures in Parliament and in different universities. He said he would consult with Sir Samuel and help us in many ways. I have sent my letters to Sir Samuel, Mr. Henry Wheeler, Sir Charles Tegart, and Lord Irwin. It will take me at least six months to see all those to whom I have letters. They are again introducing me to their friends.

On Sunday next I shall see Me. H.I.S. Polak, solicitor, at tea, being invited. I am thinking of inviting those whom I have already seen. Back date for a return invitation is unmannerly. Samvit has taken his admission today for doctorate and paid £21. Samvit is daily cooking for us. In the night we have milk, bread, and curry. This is all that we have as our food. The news agencies are giving full attention to us. During the last week the following papers have published about us:

1. *Times*—"A Hindu Mission"
2. *Belfast Telegraph*—"Hindu Leader with Another Religion Arriving in London with Flowing Robes Introduced by Viceroy"
3. *Yorksire Herald*—"The New Religion of Unalloyed Devotion"

4. *Irish Daily Telegraph*—"Another Hindu Religion"
5. *Yorkshire Evening News*—"Hindu Spreads Gospel of Love"
6. *Jersey Morning News*—"New Religion Comes in London"
7. *Sports General*—"Hindu Leader Brings a New Religion. Unalloyed Devotion and Human Love Creed Founded 1486"
8. *Daily Express*—"Indian Mystic Monk to Lecture in England"

> Early this week we expect many more papers to publish news about us. Philosophy will not appeal to them very much at the beginning. We must first create interest in the public. We have not yet received the books from Bombay. I have got receipt of the dispatch of *Sree Krishna Chaitanya* from Bombay; the books will reach by S.S. Mandola, in which many delegates for the economic conference are coming. In addressing letters to us, particularly registered letters, wires, and money orders, kindly instruct not to write "His Holiness" or "Bon Mahārāja." We will not be given delivery of things and money in that case. Our name in wires or letters must correspond with name in the passports. It is "Tridaṇḍī Svāmī B.H. Bon" or "Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Bhakti Hṛday Bon," and no "Mahārāja."

Letter of Saṁvidānanda dated 12-5-33

> The climate changes several times even in a day.

Notwithstanding that the delegates were being supported from India at the great expense of seven hundred rupees per month, what initially promised to be a plum assignment was actually fraught with hardships. By social necessity they were sometimes obliged to take meals cooked by nondevotees, even having to eat vegetables prepared alongside meat—a massive austerity endured for the sake of preaching.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī directed his disciples how to continue amid such adversities, and encouraged them:

> You should always be submissive and courteous to all whom you meet, however unpleasant a situation they may create. You should know that you are, after all, poor Indians. You are to always left and right crave sympathy from the people there. Specially as you are a true Vaiṣṇava, you should endure all sorts of sufferings and should be proving fully submissive to all you meet in a foreign country.[4]

> May Śrī Kṛṣṇa bless you in your noblest endeavors in carrying the message of the Supreme Lord Śrī Caitanya to a land where such transcendental news had not reached before you graced the banks of the Thames.[5]

During May 1933, the London Gauḍīya Maṭha was started in a rented house at 39 Drayton Gardens, Kensington, a prestigious neighborhood. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura wrote:

> Your conversation, in line with the teachings of the divine Lord, with the cultured people

> of the West, will surely be appreciated by all sincere souls amidst their busy lives. I do not know anybody who was more delighted than myself to hear that at last a Gauḍīya Maṭha branch has been opened in the British Isles.[6]

Although at first confounded by the intricacies of British etiquette, Śrīmad Bon Mahārāja et al took help from their sympathetic landlord to acquaint themselves with the convoluted manners required for being considered at least minimally civilized. Swami Bon augmented this informal tuition by studying a voluminous book on English usages—how to eat with knife and fork, how to sit, laugh, and smile in prim-and-proper Imperial style, and so on. He kept grown-out hair and wholly gave up the dress of a sannyasi to instead always wear trousers and shirts. "Booted and suited," he moved among those members of the English gentry who were curious and condescending enough to welcome him. Whenever possible he delivered public lectures, some written by Professor Sanyal and sent by airmail. Meanwhile Śrīmad B.P. Tīrtha Mahārāja concentrated on translating and writing in English, and on homely grassroots preaching by cultivating the interest of spiritual inquirers who came forward. He wrote back to Calcutta conveying that small children would approach him in the evenings and say "Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya" and were learning rudimentary Bengali, and that their English pronunciation of the holy names sounded very sweet.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura regularly sent letters of encouragement and guidance to these disciples preaching in such alien circumstances, far from the land of their birth and everything they were accustomed to:

> If you establish centers in villages in England, with deities of Jagannātha and Śrīman Mahāprabhu, and offer Indian-style preparations and distribute *mahā-prasāda,* then the English will gradually develop a sympathy for and faith in Indians and then be inclined to further the Lord's service. Oh, for the day when the people of that country will sing the names of Gaura and, with a spiritual attitude, honor transcendental *prasāda* from the temple. Then they will understand true spiritual life and cultivate Kṛṣṇa consciousness.[7]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura also penned replies to inquiries, mailed from his disciples, from notable people in England. At the end of May 1933, he answered both the Earl of Zetland and the Marquis of Ludian. In June he received appreciative letters from some prominent Britishers, among them Lord Irwin, a former viceroy of India; Sir Stanley Jackson, past governor of Bengal; and the editor of the *Times*. In July, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's disciples were called to a ceremony at Buckingham Palace organized for lieges from throughout the Empire to shake hands with King George V in acknowledgement of his sovereignty. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura responded encouragingly:

> I was much pleased to learn that the senior *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* has been honored and received by Her Majesty the Queen of England. This unforeseen chance is really a very rare opportunity that hardly falls to the lot of a monk with triple-staff and bowl in hand. We take pride in your acting as our proxy in a distant land, which our crippled movements have not yet approached.[8]

The London preachers met formally with various distinguished persons, again with the monarchs, and also with the archbishop of Canterbury and the archbishop of York. And Śrīmad Bon Mahārāja addressed many gatherings, including one each at both Oxford and Cambridge universities. Nevertheless, they found it difficult to make any significant impression on all but a few of these people, whose bigoted mindset had been summarized in the famous couplet "Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet."[9] Lady Willingdon, wife of the ex-viceroy of India, typified such snobbery by saying, "Your men from India come here, we give them some degree, and they become big men there. So what have you got to teach us?"

In January 1934 Śrīpāda Rāsa-bihārī Brahmacārī Bhakti Jyotiḥ joined the group in London as a factotum, his main duties being to cook and help in meeting with people. In April 1936 he returned to India.

In September 1934 Śrīmad B.P. Tīrtha Mahārāja returned to India. In a letter dated 15 October 1935 Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī reiterated propaganda strategies for the West and warned of the hazards of exposure to Western ways of thinking:

> You opine that a suitable person for preaching should be sent there. Yet even if one is intellectually fit, his devotional spirit could greatly decrease on going to that country. The people of that country think themselves very learned, and in material affairs they surely are. But our subject of propaganda is not exactly that. If by your demonstrating a devotional model their minds change even slightly, then we may gain their friendship. Those who go to the West and are attracted by prevalent contemporary thoughts, become enamored by its external glitter and thus relegate to secondary status the inner beauty of the soul. One sees this not only among the stranded students; many others unwittingly enter this state.[10*]

And just three days later, in another missive, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura explained that he did not expect his disciples there to immediately make spectacular progress, for they were laying the groundwork that might bear fruit centuries later. Yet he cautioned them not to compromise on philosophy:

> It is necessary to demonstrate the ideal that Indian traditions and ways of thinking are completely different from those of that country. The inhabitants thereof do not register in their minds anything about the behavior, knowledge, religious principles, or devotion of India. Therefore you must somehow attempt to give them this knowledge and attract them to the *bhakti* path. After a few hundred years they will be able to somewhat comprehend the true nature of *bhakti.* One must give them an elementary introduction. *** has developed a high opinion of Western ideas and opines that for preserving the purity of *bhakti* it is to some extent necessary to accept other philosophies. I have also heard it said that we cannot adapt *bhakti* there unless we are familiar with the country. But on the whole, we should not delve into contaminated thought-systems. Practically speaking, we should not take shelter of other philosophies and forsake the source of everyone's real

eternal benefit.[11]

One of the Gauḍīya emissaries' best contacts was Lord Ronaldshay, the Earl of Zetland and from 1917 to 1922 the governor of Bengal.[*] Broad-minded and with a fascination for India, he had written several books about his travels in and the problems facing that land, in which he expressed appreciation for many aspects of Hinduism, thus contravening the colonialist ethic of condemning everything Indian as inferior, particularly her religion. He had a special inclination toward Caitanya Mahāprabhu's movement and had written about having come across a *kīrtana* party in Assam whose ecstatic crescendo outranked all his previous experiences. He was similarly impressed with his visit to Navadvīpa, and in his account gave a twenty-page biography of Lord Caitanya in accordance with descriptions in *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata.*

The earl had offered to help Gauḍīya Mission representatives venture to Britain, so when they came he welcomed them and arranged meetings for them. Upon the formal inauguration of the London Gaudiya Mission Society in April 1934, Lord Zetland agreed to become its president (with Lord Lamington the vice president). And by Lord Zetland's influence, some other socialites showed interest in the Mission. When later appointed to the British Cabinet, he received the following cablegram from Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura:

> My Lord Marquess,
>
> It is with feelings of great joy that I, on behalf of the members of the Gauḍīya Mission in India, do hail this opportunity of conveying our hearty and most respectful congratulations to Your Lordship for kindly accepting a prominent position in the British Cabinet as the secretary of state for India. Being purely and thoroughly religious people, although we are not very conversant and very keenly concerned with political issues, we may make bold to state this much, that Your Lordship is perhaps the only person in the whole of Great Britain who enjoys the most unflinching confidence of the vast people of this country, and who can most ably guide their destinies in this critical moment; and we are sure many of their legitimate aspirations will be fulfilled so as to tighten more closely the silken tie of friendship and goodwill between the British and the Indians.
>
> So far as we are concerned, Your Lordship being the most distinguished patron and president of our London Gaudiya Mission Society, it is a proud occasion of great importance and honor to us to express our most heartfelt felicitations for this significant appointment. May the Supreme Lord grant Your Lordship a long life and glorious success in Your Lordship's mission, and may He bestow His choicest blessings on Your Lordship.
>
> With the kindest regards to Your Lordship,
>
> I am, in the service of the Supreme Lord,
>
> (Sd) Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī[12]

Despite his patronage and apparent enthusiasm, Lord Ronaldshay was not serious about cultivating Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti.* He once jestingly asked Śrī Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī, "Can you make me a *brāhmaṇa*?" "Yes, why not?" was the reply. But upon hearing the requirements—no meat-eating, illicit sex, intoxication, or gambling—Lord Zetland proclaimed, "Impossible!"[*] Nonetheless, he continued to preside over meetings of the Gauḍīya Mission and invite others of his circle to attend.

The Gauḍīya emissaries' strategy had been to attract the top notch of society, but it appeared that the aristocracy was either too proud or too entangled in sinful activities to adopt *śuddha-bhakti.* More hopeful was that about a dozen commoners were regular attendees at meetings of the London Gauḍīya Maṭha. When news came of Westerners taking interest in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura authorized his sannyasi disciples to award them *harināma* on his behalf, which was performed for at least three recruits.

In 1928, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had consulted his old acquaintance Rabindranath Tagore, who was a widely traveled cultural icon, about prospects overseas. Tagore advised that in Europe and America the appeal for Indian culture had been spoiled by certain swamis who had gone there and flirted with women, so now it was likely that even an upright and qualified Indian would be doubted by the higher section of foreigners. He further mused that the English consider themselves very advanced and intelligent, and as rulers, would not care to hear from their vassals. He opined that the poor expositions given by Indian philosophers who had gone to France had diminished the former good opinion of Indian philosophy held by French intellectuals, who now considered that they had nothing to learn from Indians, who were simply distorting the advanced thoughts of French philosophers, and that the Frenchman's temperament is to taunt foreigners. In America, the less literate and females still have a shallow interest in what they consider Indian mysticism, but the high society has no regard for it. Tagore considered the Germans intelligent and appreciative of philosophy, and concluded, "I feel that the Germans will properly receive you, and that if so, similar respect will spread throughout the entire continent."[13]

Acting on this cue, Śrīmad Bon Mahārāja ventured to Germany, where he toured widely, lecturing in German and mostly at universities, including addressing an audience of more than four hundred at Bonn University. His lectures in Germany were published as a book. It was indeed a better field, wherefrom he was able to attract a few serious followers. The *Harmonist* of 4 September 1934 reported:

HITLER'S INTEREST

> Adolf Hitler, the president and chancellor of Germany, through the office of the External Politics of the German Government, has been pleased to invite Svāmī B.H. Bon as a state guest of honor for an interview with him on November 2 next.[*]

On 19 October 1934 the *Harmonist* stated:

> Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Hṛdaya Bon Mahārāja, preacher-in-charge in the West, has been invited by Herr Hitler to be state guest during the propaganda tour of the Svāmīji on the continent. Svāmīji will leave London on October 20. He is invited by different universities of Germany, Austria, and France to deliver lectures on pure and unalloyed theism.

And the *Harmonist* of 14 February 1935 reported, "Śrī Vyāsa-*pūjā* will be held in Berlin on 27 February. His Excellency Herr Dr. Goebbels has kindly consented to preside over the function."*

Śrīmad Bon Mahārāja also visited Prague for two days and from there proceeded to Vienna. And despite having ruefully surmised that the English were an unphilosophical lot, Bon Mahārāja remained focused in London, where Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura wanted a hostel established for Indians studying in Britain, or for any local students who might care to stay, to gradually expose the inmates to Hari-*kathā*. Swami Bon conceived of a Viṣṇu temple adjoining it, the complete facility to serve also as a home away from home for Indians domiciled in Great Britain.

In September 1935 Śrīmad Bon Mahārāja returned to India for a brief visit, bringing with him two Germans, Herr Ernst Georg Schulze and Baron H.E. von Koeth, to meet Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. The devotees who received Swami Bon in Bombay were shocked to see him in Western dress and without *śikhā* or *tilaka*. Several lavish receptions were accorded him and his guests—the biggest one in Calcutta, where before a crowd of ten thousand, speakers adulated this unexpected triumph of Indian culture in the West. The *Harmonist* noted that the Gauḍīya Maṭha's being able to make even a slight impression in the West was a noteworthy achievement, attributing it to the sincerity of the Gauḍīya Maṭha purpose and the cogency of its message:

> No Indian institutions run by Indian money has ventured to launch out on a European propaganda for the dissemination of the purely spiritual standpoint of this country. This absolute sincerity of purpose has not failed to appeal to the tenderest sympathies of many persons in England and Germany. But it is not easy for persons nowadays to disown completely every bond of mundane existence by unconditional reliance on the Truth Who is utterly ignored by the whole world. The faith in humanity, which is the basis of European civilization, is not prepared, naturally enough, to distinguish clearly between the temporal aberrations and the eternal interests of all animation. It is too large a proposal to be swallowed on the impulse of the moment. But as far as can be judged from the words of sympathy from those very quarters from where unqualified opposition was most expected, it is not to the largeness of the proposal that objection need to be feared but to its apparently impractical nature. European instinct is, if anything, thoroughly and aggressively pragmatic. It refuses to stop in order to listen without reserve. Ever so many enthusiasts are constantly clamoring for a hearing for their panaceas. They have no time to spare for all, even if they wished. They are prepared to give only a short hearing. They

might stick on if they suppose that at least a *prima facie* case has been made out by their visitor for his cause. On this basis the preachers of London Branch of the Gauḍīya Maṭha have received assurances of sympathy and practical support from responsible quarters both in London as well as in Berlin.[14]

But inevitably, not all in India lauded these foreign incursions. A certain sadhu, himself known to have high British contacts, when visited by Śrīmat Śrīdhara Mahārāja assailed him: "Your preachers there, like sychophants running after the officers, are actually lessening the prestige of Indian religious thought. People will ridicule them: 'Sannyasis are supposed to give up everything, yet they are chasing after lords and ladies.'" Śrīmat Śrīdhara Mahārāja replied by giving the example of extracting a thorn with a thorn, but the sadhu concluded, "This thorn will not come out; rather, that meant to remove it will also enter within." Such were the risks of preaching.

On his return to India, Śrīmad Bon Mahārāja met government officials to garner political support for and pursue the Maharaja of Tripura's funding of the proposed Viṣṇu temple. Then he headed back to England, where he was to stay for a brief period before again returning to India. Upon arriving in London he informed local newspapers of his intention to erect a Hindu temple of Viṣṇu there, the Maharaja of Tripura having plighted to defray the entire cost. Yet he was soon recalled to India by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

In October 1936 Śrī Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī was sent to continue activities in the West. In the sendoff ceremony, as in the previous one for Western preachers, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura stressed that preachers must be unaffected by false pride, and that Bhakti Sāraṅga Prabhu should not think himself a teacher, nor think those whom he would meet to be students or disciples. He warned that since Westerners are extremely proud, the only feasible method for approaching them is to be *amānī* (not desiring respect) and *mānada* (offering respect to others). Taking the garland from his neck and placing it on Bhakti Sāraṅga Prabhu, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura authorized him to give *harināma* to anyone in the Western countries who requested it. He further presented Bhakti Sāraṅga Prabhu a Gaṇḍakī-*śilā,* Gomatī-*śilā,* and Govardhana-*śilā,* instructing him to personally worship Them every day, particularly by *kīrtana.* He quoted from *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* (5.22) that a Gomatī-*śilā* with circular impressions is called a *cakra-tīrtha* (sacred object with circular markings) and is *mlecchadeśe 'pi pūjitā* (suitable for worship even in countries of sinful persons), and added that it would bestow *mukti* on the inhabitants of such places.[*] Bhakti Sāraṅga Prabhu then proceeded by train to Madras, his interim departure point before sailing from Colombo. From the Madras Gauḍīya Maṭha he brought a huge quantity of dried *tulasī* leaves and sandalwood to be offered in worship.[†]

Another important method of reaching out to the Western world was through publications. The *Harmonist* was regularly sent in exchange for various mostly esoteric and philosophical magazines from the West. On Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's order the essay "The Erotic Principle and Unalloyed Devotion," composed under his guidance by Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu and first published in the *Harmonist,* was printed as a booklet and sent throughout the world to many

libraries, politicians, religious leaders, and intellectuals. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura commissioned Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu to produce *Sree Krishna Chaitanya* depicting the Lord's pastimes, to be illuminated with philosophical explanations so plenteous that for Westerners without access to the vast Gauḍīya literature written in Bengali and Sanskrit, this book would be sufficient for becoming fully conversant with the activities and precepts of Lord Caitanya.[‡] Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura himself authored a few English publications and envisioned many more aimed particularly at Western readers.

With the advent of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the West, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī lamented that Bengalis were so much averse to the truth that even though several Westerners had accepted it, Bengalis were too absorbed in multiple preoccupations to take it up.[15] [*] He sometimes expressed a desire to personally spend ten years in the West, but also said that he was unable to do so because his presence was required in India. Indeed, while reaching out to the West he simultaneously emphasized the importance of preaching in India, telling his disciples that if one day the world populace were to come to Śrīman Mahāprabhu's feet, they would look to India as the motherland of their devotional life; hence India herself must be spiritually revived to capably perform her duty of giving spiritual guidance to all humanity.

London Days

In a speech to faculty and students of the Thakur Bhakti Vinode Institute, Śrīmad B.P. Tīrtha Mahārāja recalled his adventures in England:

"It is a matter of great pleasure to come again and join your company, a company that I prize most and above all others. I have been in England for the last two years and have seen many things worth seeing, which I never had the occasion to see before. The splendid achievements in the domain of science, art, literature, mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, etc., by the scholars of the West during the last two centuries have excited the wonder and admiration of the world, and hundreds and thousands of people of all nationalities flock there every year for pleasure, education, or the improvements of their worldly prospects. But in spite of all that: 'East is East, and West is West.' And to me it seems the East is best.

"The sun rises in the east and his light always comes from the east. The spiritual sun of the holy name has risen in the east and knows no setting. He is always illuminating, dispelling the gloom of ignorance from the minds of the people, which the material sun cannot do. Our divine master represents the spiritual sun dissipating the nescience, or *avidyā,* which is forgetfulness of our real self, from the minds of those who take absolute shelter of his lotus feet. It is he who gives the light of true knowledge to all who come in contact with him. It is he who inspired me, an insignificant ray of light, to go to the West and preach the gospel of divine love. Our divine master is the embodiment of the transcendental word identical with the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. Hence the transcendental word and the preachers who follow the transcendental word in their life and precepts are eternal.

"In England every man or woman is free. There is freedom of speech. In a free country everyone is at liberty to speak for or against anybody for the public good. There are thousands of dailies, weeklies, fortnightlies, and monthlies for this purpose. Some of the dailies are published hourly. There are thousands of museums and libraries, where hundreds and thousands visit every hour throughout the day and acquire practical experience in life with the help of whole-time professors and teachers, free of cost. So the knowledge or mundane experience of the average boys and girls is far greater than in the East.

"In England there is no restriction of men and women mixing freely with one another. But there is a wall of conservatism prevailing among the English folk from time immemorial, which does not allow a stranger to talk to anybody unless introduced by a third party known to both. So you can easily understand the great difficulty for a newcomer to get across this Chinese wall of formalities and etiquettes. We were forearmed, having equipped ourselves with credentials from some of the big officials and non-officials of this country. It was not so difficult for us to have access to some prominent persons and nobilities of England. They gave us a serious and polite hearing and sympathized with the purpose of the discourses to which they listened with great attention. We mixed on the footing of friendly intercourse with the aristocrats and intelligentsia of Great Britain for about two years, with the result that they gradually formed a very high

opinion regarding ourselves and our mission upon finding that we were unlike those strangers who mix mostly with the women.

"Three things attracted their attention toward us, namely (i) the transcendental word, whom our divine master elected us to disseminate all over the world, (ii) the strict vegetable diet which we offered to the holy name of the Supreme Lord and accepted as *prasāda,* or the favor of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and (iii) the holy garb that we received from our divine master and which you just see on my body. Our frank manners and behavior, holy dress, and divine conversations were very pleasing to them, and they often came to visit our monastery and listened to these discourses with rapt attention. With the collaboration of all those well-wishers and sympathizers of our mission, a society, known as the Gaudiya Mission Society, was established within a year in the center of London, under the presidency of the Most Honorable Marquess of Zetland and several other great notabilities of London as vice-presidents.

"When we reached England, some professors of philosophy did not hesitate to meet us with the uncompromising challenge, "If you have come here with the peacock's plumage, it would be better for you to go back to your country instead of bringing coal to Newcastle." We humbly replied, "We are neither jackdaws with borrowed feathers nor are you peacocks having tails bedecked with beautiful inanimate motionless eyes. But we have come here from the realm where there is no question of mundane sex, where there is no angular defect in the straight vision. We have come with the message of divine love. If God is one without a second, if God is universally worshiped as the common Lord of all, why then should His religion not be one? This universal religion is divine love, the connecting link between God and ourselves.

> 'Religion! What treasures untold
>
> Reside in that heavenly word,
>
> More precious than silver and gold
>
> Or aught that earth can afford.'

"This one religion means actual realization of the true natures of our self, real Godhead, this māyic world, and their interrelationship.* Just as a Londoner can speak from first-hand knowledge of London, he who lives, moves, and has his being in God can speak of God and His kingdom from his direct realization. Anything contrary-wise is a mockery of religion, or in other words, self-deception and hence self-annihilation. But we are not soul-less mummers or mercenery preachers. We are not mimics aping other nations. We have fixed our destination in the eternal center of all love, beauty, and truth, the fountainhead of all inspired truths. We are so many spiritual atomic parts inseparably linked with the entire whole by the silken tie of divine love. We have come here to place on your table with all humility and modesty the gospel of that divine love, manifested as transcendental word, or the holy name, who is one and the same with Godhead Himself, provided you be kind enough to grant us a little of your precious time and a little of your loyal and patient hearing."

“My friends, you will be wonderstruck to learn that thirty minutes is the maximum time allowed there to hear transcendental themes, and within this short time limit we were able to impress the English mind with the esoteric principles of our divine doctrine of *acintya-bhedābheda* preached and promulgated by the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, by the grace of our divine master in whose holy hands we are so many vocal instruments. He is the wire-puller and we are puppets made by him to the tune and to sing of divine love. It is our divine master's grace that is at the root of our wonderful success in the West.

“Ladies and gentlemen often asked with astonishment how it is possible for us to live on such a simple diet and plain clothing, and the reply they heard from us was ‘Whom Godhead protects none can kill or harm, in however apparently adverse and uncongenial circumstances he may be placed,’ softened their hearts, and they were moved to offer their humble greetings to the sublime and dignified potrait of our divine master that was hanging on the wall of the reception room—an event not very common to the natural temperament of the English people.

“You know that my colleague Swami Bon, a wonderful young man gifted with great natural eloquence and capacity for the exposition of the philosophy of the religion of divine love, delivered his great speeches like the Toofan Mail to his admiring audiences, who felt both contrast and relief in my humble self who, like the proverbial Indian goods train, am ready to deliver goods at every station in humdrum fashion.[*] They called at our monastery and listened to their great satisfaction to our replies to their plethora of questions regarding religion they submitted before us. They were charmed by our manners and behavior toward them. They followed us in our habits and rules of life. They abstained from all sorts of intoxicants and unholy food. They joined us in our congregational chanting of the holy name. They used to come every day and spend some time in listening to the glorious narratives of the form, attributes, and pastimes of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. In a word, they were delighted beyond measure by our transcendental discourses. Their Imperial Majesties, the King and Queen of England, took a lively interest in us when we had an occasion to meet Their Majesties at the Buckingham Palace.

“In the religion of divine love there is no distinction between philosophy and theology, because philosophy divorced from theology is mere dry abstract negation, whereas theology minus philosophy is mundane sentimentalism or psilanthropism. In England, philosophy is considered a phase of metaphysics, which is kept separate from theology, which has nothing to do with philosophy. A comparative study of religions should convince every sincere seeker after the truth that divine love, which is the eternal function of all *jīva*-souls, is the quintessence of all revealed religions. It is the keynote of true Vedāntism or Vaiṣṇavism; and all other religions, which are confined within the four walls of time and space, are either steppingstones to it or antithetical to progress in the spiritual march.

“My dear teachers and students! The great prediction of Śrīla Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda that a day will come when the East as well the West will hug one another in loving embrace under the banner of the Supreme Lord Śrī Caitanya, engaging themselves in loudly chanting the holy

name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is sure to be fulfilled, and that in no distant date. The soil has been prepared and weeded out, the seed has been sown that will ere long sprout and grow into a beautiful tree bearing sweet-scented flowers and delicious fruits to be tasted by the devotees of the East as well as the West."[16] *

Six

Christianity

Ironically, although Western Christians overseas tended to brusquely present their creed with a triumphalism that in their minds precluded dialogue or consideration of other beliefs, at home their religion had already effectively lost the ideological battle with empiricism, having been forced into detente with the scientific outlook. And although Christian missionaries were at least as eager to conquer the world as were their more politically and economically motivated colonialist compatriots, the international ethos had effectively shifted toward a humanistic and relativistic perspective, under the influence of Western trends in the slipstream of modern education. Nevertheless, Christianity undeniably remained a major influence in the world—four-fifths of the earth's land surface was ruled by at least nominal Christians—and a doctrine whose challenge Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was obliged to face.

He did so by highlighting both its strengths and weaknesses. Echoing Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who in his early life was much exposed to Christianity and appreciated its personalist theistic basis, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura considered Christianity a partial step toward Vaiṣṇava dharma, and described Lord Caitanya's teachings as "extended Christianity."[1] In other words, Christ's message in its pristine and fully blossomed form is included in Lord Caitanya's philosophy, for Mahāprabhu's gifts are of an altogether higher dimension than the acceptance of God's existence, the promises of reward and threats of punishment, and the moral injunctions that form the basis of Christianity; and whereas Christianity expounds the fatherhood of Godhead, Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma goes further, to the transcendental son-hood and consort-hood of Godhead. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura described that to consider the Lord our parent entails "the rotten concept that He is our servitor and we the enjoyers."[2] As he told the challenging Professor Suthers, "We claim to be greater and better Christians than Westerners." While lauding Jesus as a *śaktyāveśa-avatāra*[3] who "did not teach the 'eat, drink, and be merry' business,"[4] Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura clearly delineated the superior position of Gaura-*bhaktas* over that of Lord Jesus:

> In the Western countries, Christians believe that the magnanimous Lord Jesus Christ is the only guru, who appeared in this world to accept the burden of all sins of the *jīvas.* But associates of Śrī Gaura like Śrī Vāsudeva Datta Ṭhākura and Śrī Haridāsa Ṭhākura are unlimitedly millions of times more advanced and liberal than Jesus Christ, because they taught Vaiṣṇava *prema-bhāva* to benefit all people in the universe.
>
> In Śrī Vāsudeva Datta Ṭhākura, selflessness by relinquishing mundane self-interest, and others' and one's own spiritual welfare in the form of serving Viṣṇu, are superbly harmonized. Recognizing Śrī Gaurasundara as the ultimate reality devoid of all illusion and the original Personality of Godhead, Vāsudeva Datta bore on his shoulders the burden of the material disease of all *jīvas*—their indifference to Kṛṣṇa—and not only their sins, but

superlatively more formidable, their multitudinous terrible offenses. Thus he sincerely prayed with mind, body, and words to free the *jīvas* from the malady of material existence. This example of compassion is far beyond the imagination of the greatest *karmīs* and *jñānīs,* not only in this world, but in all the fourteen worlds.

Since the *jīvas,* prone to violence because of seeing differences arising from false identity due to illusion, revere and idealize *karma* and *jñāna* in the world of duality, most of them become bad *karmīs* and bad *jñānīs.* On hearing of the desire of Vāsudeva Datta Ṭhākura, the servant of the spiritual world, to suffer in hell for these *jīvas,* such persons, who are impelled by innate malice and a dualistic outlook, give him great respect, seeing him as a regular pious *karmī* or *jñānī.* But Datta Ṭhākura's compassion for the *jīvas* is unlimitedly millions of times greater than that conceivable by bad *karmīs* and bad *jñānīs.* This is not highly prejudiced exaggeration or interpretation, but straightforward elucidation of the truth. Verily, the world is blessed by the coming of such servants of Gaura, by whom not just this earth, but all *jīvas* everywhere, have become fortunate.

Eloquent speakers' tongues reach perfection by glorifying the qualities of such devotees of Lord Caitanya. And the pens of poets and historians who have forsaken mundane research attain their highest success in describing the qualities of these *mahā-bhāgavatas* imbued with selfless devotion to the Lord. Such is the "greatness among greats" and "gloriousness among the glorious" of the servants of the abundantly magnanimous Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya.[5]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī detected the flaw in philosophically attempting either to humanize God or deify man, which albeit present in perverted Hinduism in a conceptually quite different manner, was the very foundation of Christianity. When some Christian priests proposed to him that *mādhurya-rasa* is also an aspect of Christianity, as evidenced by those medieval mystics who sought unity with Christ as their bridegroom, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī rejected that claim, for such esoteric endeavors were focused on the son of Godhead rather than directly on the Supreme Lord Himself.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura shed the light of Gauḍīya *siddhānta* on certain Biblical teachings. He equated Jesus' famous submission "Thy will be done," spoken from the position of a devotee, to the similarly well-known conclusion of *Bhagavad-gītā, sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja* (Abandon all varieties of dharma and just surrender unto Me), uttered from the standpoint of Godhead. He cited Biblical instructions to chant the names of God as being in accord with the *saṅkīrtana* movement, and stated that if offered in unmixed devotion, church prayers are also *kīrtana.*

He deemed the supplication "Give us our daily bread" as being far from true devotion, for God should not be regarded as a servitor to be called upon to provide corporal demands; rather, one should request food for the soul. He would often quote the commandment "Do not take the name of the Lord in vain" and comment that it had been misinterpreted by "pseudo-teachers"; God should not be called upon for supplying temporal needs, and thus to not take His name in vain means to chant without *anyābhilāṣa* (motive other than pure devotion):

> Pure devotees do not chant the Lord's names to counteract sinful reactions, accumulate piety, or attain supernal pleasures, nor to mitigate famine, pestilence, social unrest, civil insurrection, or disease, nor to obtain wealth, an earthly kingdom, or any other object of personal enjoyment. Since the name of Bhagavān is directly the Supreme Personality of Godhead, to ask Him to fulfil our wishes is to consider Him, the supremely worshipable, our servant. This is an offense.
>
> Therefore, calling the Lord's names for any reason other than to attain His devotional service is useless. Jesus Christ told us not to take the Lord's name in vain, or uselessly.
>
> Yet this doesn't mean that we do not need to chant the Lord's names constantly—while sleeping, while dreaming, while eating, or when walking about. To chant the Lord's name, begging for His service, is not a useless activity; it is our only duty.
>
> But to make a show of chanting for some other purpose, for actualizing our own desires, is useless. We should not take up chanting the Lord's names in vain. We should not chant to attain *dharma-artha-kāma-mokṣa.* Instead, we should always chant to attain service to Bhagavān.[6]
>
> Do not chant the name for elevation or salvation, whereby you will entangle yourself instead of attaining service to the Absolute.[7]

In Christians' emphasis on mundane charitable works, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī perceived ignorance of the rudimentary spiritual principle of difference between body and soul. And he detected aversion to Godhead in the concept of a Beelzebub, or a rival of Godhead.[8] He declared that hearing and chanting of Hari-*kathā* is the actual method for purgation of sins, and that the Western system of confession is hypocritical.[9] He stated that through the misconceptions that there can be only one guru in the total course of history, and that the soul has only one birth, Semites had introduced many obstacles to legitimate spiritual understanding, and that such misunderstandings must be dispelled.[*] He also warned that if the semitic psychology, represented by the notion of an undefinable Supreme Being, was tantamount to asserting that God is formless, then it struck at the very root of all genuine spiritual activity.[10] Similarly, he found a whiff of voidism in the Christian doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*. And in a letter sent to Saṁvidānanda Prabhu in London, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī confided that because the outlook of Westerners was based one hundred percent on sense enjoyment, their belief in God was not solid, but tenuous and blurred.

The *Harmonist* analyzed Christianity and mundane empiricism as concordant, inasmuch as both "justify the life of refined eating and drinking,"[11] and also deemed: "The Bible contains some indirect references to transcendence hopelessly mixed up with precepts of mundane ethical expediency."[12] Further:

> The questions that will require to be discussed in connection with the teaching of the Bible, as it is current among the Christians of our day, will be as follows:

1. Nebulous conception of the Personality of Godhead.
2. Mundane and numerically limited conception of saviorship (guru).
3. Confusion between conditioned and free spiritual functions.
4. Overvaluation of hollow mundane morality.
5. Confusion between so-called moral and spiritual conduct.
6. Mundane organization of the Christian church.
7. Superstitious rituals and doctrines opposed to philosophical and scientific experience.[13]

Circa 1903 Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī was traveling with Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura by train from Ranaghat to Krishnanagar when a Christian dignitary, Reverend Butler, entered their coach. Seeing the *japa-mālās* in their hands he inquired about their identity, to which Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī replied, "Like you, we are missionaries. We are preachers of Śrī Caitanya's dharma." Immediately the priest challenged that the dharma of Śrī Caitanya consisted of idol worship and taking the Lord's name in vain. After hearing Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's protracted response, Reverend Butler declared that previously he had discussed the same topics with many reputed *paṇḍitas* and religious leaders of Navadvīpa, but unlike Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī, none had been able to give an intelligent response.[14]

When told that no one in Vṛndāvana could proffer a satisfactory rebuttal to a visiting Christian priest who had accused Kṛṣṇa of flouting Vedic principles by dancing with others' wives, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī commented that Vṛndāvana is inhabited by neophyte devotees.

Christians who came in contact with Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism tended to become perplexed at how a doctrine so theistic and devotional could yet be founded on what they considered indelicate tales of the adulterous liaison between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. They invariably made the seminal miscalculation of ascribing the abysmal condition of contemporary Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma to an intrinsic amorality, an opinion that modern-thinking Hindus typically dittoed. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his followers invested tremendous energy to refute such claims and establish Kṛṣṇa's purity as far beyond that imaginable by mundane moralists, whose insistence that Godhead must conform to behavioral standards was actually an impertinent imposition on His absolute freedom.[*]

Mr. M.T. Kennedy's *The Chaitanya Movement* (1925) accurately portrayed the depravity of much of Gauḍīya society. Yet Kennedy performed a disservice by failing to describe actual devotees, thus painting the whole of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma as corrupt, and also by regarding Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu as unfortunate for having concentrated His devotion on the "immoral" Kṛṣṇa rather than on Christ. Before compiling his account Kennedy had corresponded with Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, but subsequently he gathered information from others. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī suspected that in apprehension of receiving from him a flawless conception of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma, Kennedy had deliberately researched elsewhere. The various doctrinal, historical, and logical errors of *Chaitanya Movement* were confuted both in the *Gauḍīya* and *Harmonist,* wherein Kennedy was further exposed for

dishonestly presenting himself as unbiased when in fact he was partisan in presupposing Christian superiority, and for "propagating atheism under the garb of evangelical language."[†]

Seven

Islam

Although the Muslim population of pre-partition India was the largest in the world, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and his followers engaged very little with Islam.[*] This could be because most Indian Muslims were not of the social level that the Gauḍīya Maṭha principally targeted. The vast majority of Indian Muslims were economically, socially, and educationally backward; in East Bengal, despite being thirty percent more numerous, Muslims were overshadowed by Hindus in all fields.

Hindus considered Muslims not only untouchable, but also the worst offenders, for killing cows; whereas Muslims spurned Hindus as kafirs for, among other sins, worshiping idols, men, and animals. The insularity that pervaded Indian society was particularly marked among Hindus and Muslims, the two communities usually living in separate locales in both towns and villages.[†] Although in daily life Hindus and Muslims generally coexisted peacefully, mutual amity being not uncommon, still, there was no fusion or synthesis, and an underlying distrust resulting from centuries of volatile discord would sporadically degrade into fresh rounds of communal violence.

The Gauḍīya Maṭha was almost entirely composed of persons of Hindu background, and to extrinsic vision its practices and culture were decidedly Hindu. Of course, Gauḍīya Maṭha members identified themselves philosophically not as Hindus but as servants of Lord Caitanya's mission, and they welcomed the few Muslims who came forward to join, support, or even inquire about their activities. Nevertheless, the Muslim world was particularly impervious, for almost all Muslims were by upbringing unable to even consider adopting concepts, activities, or aspirations beyond that ordained by the sharia. Preaching to Muslims was risky; attempts at conversion were liable to evoke violent responses. Furthermore, being largely in remission and non-evangelical, Islam was not a voice demanding a riposte. Having significantly better prospects elsewhere, the Gauḍīya Maṭha preachers prudently kept their distance.

Eight

Other Vaiṣṇava Sampradāyas and Sadhus

Despite his inexorable criticism of misrepresentatives of Vaiṣṇava dharma, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was clearly not sectarian, for he recognized genuine devotion wherever it was manifest. And that he profoundly respected the four bona fide Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas* was apparent from his installing at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha the deities of their founding *ācāryas.*

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had quoted Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu as incorporating into His teachings two essential items from each *sampradāya-ācārya:* from Madhva, complete conquest over Māyāvāda, and service to the deity of Kṛṣṇa, accepting Him as eternal spiritual truth; from Rāmānuja, the template of *bhakti* unpolluted by *karma* and *jñāna,* and service to devotees; from Viṣṇusvāmī, the mood of considering that everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa, and the *rāga-mārga;* and from Nimbārka, the need to take exclusive shelter of Rādhā, and *gopī-bhāva.*[1] Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had predicted that soon all devotional *sampradāyas* would merge into one, which would be known as the Śrī Brahma *sampradāya.*[2]

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had translated and published some writings from all four Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas,* thus making them available for the first time to the Bengali public. Following this lead, while conducting research in the early twentieth century Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī thoroughly studied the works of several Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas,* particularly the *Vedānta-sūtra* commentaries of Śrī Rāmānuja, Śrī Madhva, and Śrī Nimbārka, plus the only extant fragment of Śrī Viṣṇusvāmī's commentary.[*] The Mādhva classics *Nyāya-sudhā* by Jayatīrtha and *Nyāyāmṛta* by Vyāsa Tīrtha were to provide Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī his principal arguments against Māyāvāda. He was the first scholar from Bengal to thoroughly appraise the literature and history of the Śrī and Mādhva *sampradāyas.* Starting from 1898 he published in *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* brief biographies of prominent luminaries of, and later produced in Bengali certain books of, these *sampradāyas*. He recommended that all devotees, especially those eager to know *siddhānta,* read *Artha-pañcaka,* an essay by Pillāi Lokācārya of the Śrī *sampradāya,* which presents Vaiṣṇava philosophy in a nutshell and had first been published in Bengali by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who in his notes to that edition stated that the *siddhāntas* of Śrīmad Rāmānuja Svāmī were the foundation of the Gauḍīya *prema-mandira.*[3]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura respected these *sampradāyas'* contributions toward Vaiṣṇava dharma, particularly their refutations of Śaṅkarācārya's Māyāvāda. He was the first *ācārya* to research and compile information on the four Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas* and to emphasize that their common goal of Viṣṇu-*bhakti* was of greater import than their differences. Yet he wished to establish the superlative position of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma by demonstrating that whatever was lacking or merely tacit in other systems was present and fully manifest in the *rasa* theology of Gauḍīya *vedānta,* which by completely describing the intimacies of the personal nature of Bhagavān offers opportunities for each *jīva* to maximize his potential for serving the Lord,

culminating in the highest ecstasies of spontaneous love of Godhead.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura compared other Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas* to different varieties of sweetmeats, such as *rasagullā, cāmcām,* and *sandeśa,* all of which are palatable and nourishing, yet he maintained that the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* includes everything in other *sampradāyas* plus more—being enriched with the *vāṇī* and *bhāva* of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, it is like sweets fortified with vitamins, just as Rādhā gives Kṛṣṇa the tastiest and most nutritious confections.[4]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī explained the inner significance of the upcoming Māyāpur Pradarśanī:

> The only subject shown at the Māyāpur Pradarśanī will be that of residence on the banks of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa, and of establishing that Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa is approachable solely by Gauḍīyas. Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa cannot be approached or realized even an iota by those who worship Kṛṣṇa as Bāla Gopāla, as the Lord of Rukmiṇī, or in His forms as Viṣṇu or Rāmacandra; nor by the imitative worship of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa by the Nimbārka *sampradāya,* whose *svakīya-vāda* is actually more akin to worship of Rukmiṇī-Kṛṣṇa.[*] If this can be demonstrated at the exhibition then all will appreciate the specialty of Mahāprabhu's teachings. Let all of this be revealed as much as Kṛṣṇa desires.[5]

He also commented that Rādhā-kuṇḍa is available only to the followers in Rādhā's group, and that other Vaiṣṇavas, such as those in the Vallabha *sampradāya,* although sometimes mentioning the name of Śrī Rādhā and glorifying Her, had no real understanding of Her and were not qualified to enter Rādhā-kuṇḍa. He opined that the discipular followers of Śrī Rāmānuja, Śrī Madhva, Śrī Viṣṇusvāmī, Śrī Nimbārka, and Śrī Śaṅkarācārya were all more or less sectarian, and that Mahāprabhu, by presenting the perfect all-encompassing conclusion of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, was the spiritual synthesizer of all religious paths.[6]

At Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's bidding, Śrī-yukta Śacīndracandra-deva Sharma from Śrīraṅgam, who was a *paṇḍita* of the Śrī *sampradāya,* and the Mādhva *paṇḍita* Adamāra Viṭṭhalācārya Dvaita-vedānta-vidvān from Mysore stayed in Māyāpur for about two years instructing some of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's particularly intellectual disciples on the philosophical intricacies within the teachings of their respective *sampradāyas,* specifically discoursing on the *Upaniṣads* and on works by their *sampradāya-ācāryas* that refuted Māyāvāda. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would discuss with these *paṇḍitas* concerning various abstruse points connected with philosophy and Sanskrit language and literature. Śrī-yukta Śacīndracandra-deva Sharma assisted in preparing a Bengali rendering of *Vedānta-tattva-sāra,* a treatise ascribed to Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya summarizing the gist of his philosophy. Paṇḍita Viṭṭhalācārya composed two works in Sanskrit, both published by the Gauḍīya Maṭha: *Śrī Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī Digvijaya,* giving an overview of the travels of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura during the winter of 1926–27, festivals in Māyāpur, and the Navadvīpa-dhāma Parikramā; and *Śrī Śrīman Madhvācārya-kṛta-sarva-mūla-granthānāṁ Saṅkṣiptaṁ Sārāṁśa-varṇanam,* a concise description of the essential points of all the original books composed by Madhvācārya.[†] He also

wrote articles for the Sanskrit edition of the *Harmonist* and drafted a Vaiṣṇava annotation on the eleven principal *Upaniṣads*.[*] Disregarding strong mores against intercaste dining, these two *paṇḍitas* honored *mahā-prasāda* together with all the Gauḍīya Maṭha devotees.[†]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī declared Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya an avatar of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and further commented:[‡]

> Śrī Rāmānuja taught the world about opulent temple worship and thus created auspiciousness for persons covered with *anarthas* and opposed to worshiping the form of the Lord. He very quickly trampled the mad elephant of Māyāvāda philosophy and established himself as a worshipable Vaiṣṇava *ācārya.* But even such a great Vaiṣṇava could not access the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa-*prema,* attained only through *saṅkīrtana*.[7]

The *Harmonist* exhorted its readers to study Mādhva teachings:

> Mādhva literature should be studied with the utmost care by all Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. It will help them to understand the teaching of Śrī Caitanya-deva in its development. Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas must become familiar with the Mādhva literature in order to be able to follow intelligently the religion disclosed by Mahāprabhu Śrī Caitanya.[8]

While lauding the Mādhva *sampradāya,* the same *Harmonist* article commented on its current state:

> The present-day followers of Śrīla Madhvācārya in the south part of the country are decidely of a most conservative tendency and are disposed to set their face against all proselytising tendency.[9]

After establishing the Mādhva Gauḍīya Maṭha in Dacca, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and his followers were repeatedly beset by local residents as to the meaning of the name Mādhva. Authentic ministration of Gauḍīya *siddhānta* having been long absent in East Bengal, even well-versed *paṇḍitas* were unaware of the existence of this name, let alone its import. Many considered it a misspelling or grammatical error and would "correct" the Gauḍīya Maṭha men that it should be Mādhava. Others mispronounced it as Mādhya. To dispell the misconceptions of the local intelligentsia and educate them as to the actual purpose of the Mādhva Gauḍīya Maṭha, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī delivered four deeply knowledgeable lectures there in October 1924, titled "Śrī Mādhva Sampradāya," "Śrī Madhva and the Pūrṇaprajña Philosophy," "Madhva and Varṇāśrama-dharma," and "The Mādhva-Gauḍīya Conclusion." In these discourses he perspicaciously disinterred the connection, assonances, and differences between Mādhva and Gauḍīya teachings and demonstrated the ultimate superiority of Gauḍīya *siddhānta.*

At Rādhā-kuṇḍa in 1935, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura commented on Śrī Madhva's understanding that upon perfectly executing the duties of a *brāhmaṇa* for a hundred lives one could attain the post of Brahmā, wherefrom he could be elevated to the position of a Vaiṣṇava, explaining that

Śrī Gaurasundara's judgment was more exalted because He offered all perfection in just one human birth.[10]

Commenting on Nimbārka worship of Śrī Rādhā-Govinda, he stated:

> Appearing as *rādhā-bhāva-dyuti-suvalita-tanu* (a form adorned with the feelings and complexion of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī), Kṛṣṇacandra can reveal to the world topics of Śrī Rādhā.[11] Dear devotees of Kṛṣṇacandra are also competent to speak on that subject; others are not. Previously those on this plane who spoke of Rādhā, as did Nimbārka to Śrīnivāsācārya and Sudarśanācārī, did not reveal Her nature in such a rich and elaborate manner.* Those who lacked eligibility to enter the midday pastimes gave great respect to these activities of Rādhā-Govinda. Though the nocturnal pastimes on the bank of the Yamunā were glorified by Nimbārka and others, in comparison, the sweetness and excellence of the Rādhā-Govinda presented by Rūpa Gosvāmī and the intimate followers of Lord Caitanya is far more complete and elevated.
>
> Prior to Lord Caitanya no one was able to perfectly describe the superiority of *acintya-bhedābheda-rasa* over *dvaitādvaita,* or the confidential levels of Goloka, or the ever-fresh and astounding pastimes at the base of a desire tree in a grove on the bank of Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Some of these previous devotees could realize *rāsa-līlā,* yet none could comprehend how Rādhā gained qualification for serving Kṛṣṇa in the midday pastimes. They were not qualified for such beautiful service.
>
> Attracted by the sound of the flute, many unmarried and married *gopīs* were qualified to participate in the *rāsa-līlā,* but in the verse featuring the words *dolāraṇyāmbu-vaṁśī-hṛti-rati-madhu-pānārka-pūjādi,* Rūpa Gosvāmī has said that topics of the highest pastimes can be entered into only by Gauḍīya servants of *madhura-rasa,* who are Lord Caitanya's associates.* No one in the Nimbārka *sampradāya* understands this subject.[12]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura postulated that the current Nimbārka *sampradāya* had no connection with the original, that its literature and method of worshiping Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa had been formulated in imitation of and in a competitive spirit toward that of the Gauḍīyas, and that the extant works ascribed to Nimbārka and Viṣṇusvāmī were covered Māyāvāda.[13]

A *Gauḍīya* article suggested that since there was no mention of the Ni mbā rka *sampradāya* in the works of *ācāryas* Rāmānuja, Viṣṇusvāmī, or Madhva, or even in those of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī although he often quoted Rāmānuja and Madhva, it could be that Keśava Kāśmīrī had revived the Nimbārka *sampradāya* in much the same manner that Vallabha, after being defeated by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, had established himself as the leader of a new *sampradāya.* The article further stated that the commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra* ascribed to Nimbārka was unknown at the time of the Six Gosvāmīs and that after learning of *rāgānuga-bhakti* from the Gauḍīyas, Vallabha had incorporated its sentiments into his newly conceived *puṣṭi-mārga.*[14]*

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was the first modern scholar to write on the history and philosophy of the Viṣṇusvāmī *sampradāya,* making in his early years of research penetrating efforts to unearth the scant information concerning it. He described how after considerable investigation he had ascertained that at different times three major *ācāryas* of the name Viṣṇusvāmī had led that *sampradāya,* which at some point became influenced by Māyāvāda.[15]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī enjoyed good relations with Vallabha *sampradāya* dignitaries in Calcutta, the foremost of whom often went to hear him explain the intricacies of Gauḍīya *siddhānta* and reciprocally invited him to their functions. On his travels also, generally Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was respectfully received by Vallabha *sampradāya* Vaiṣṇavas. Yet he once said that a court case should be made against them to reestablish that the deity of Śrīnāthajī belongs to the Gauḍīyas.[†] The *Harmonist* commented:

> There is a great difference between the ideas and practices of the present-day followers of Śrī Vallabhācārya and those of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, notwithstanding their apparent superficial resemblance. The system of *bhedābheda* philosophy in the practical form in which it is presented in the works of Śrī Vallabhācārya is of comparatively modern origin and younger than the system of Śrī Caitanya. There exists very strong evidence to prove that the current creed—claimed to have been taught by Śrī Vallabhācārya—is a later offshoot of the system of Śrī Caitanya, although it has even been presented as the original source of the latter in order to explain its resemblance to the teachings of Śrī Caitanya. A thorough study of both systems should help to remove doubts on this point. There may come a day when the followers of Śrī Vallabhācārya will realize the real relationship of their *ācārya* to Śrī Caitanya-deva and, by unreserved acceptance of the teachings of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, will merge into the Church Universal as the humble followers of the Supreme Lord, who is the original propounder of the religion of pure love.[16]

Two noted sadhus of the Śrī *sampradāya*—Gadādhara Rāmānuja dāsa of the Emār Maṭha (upon whom Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura bestowed the title Sad-dharma Sindhu) and Siddha Mahātmā Vāsudeva Rāmānuja dāsa—as well as the Gauḍīya *bābājī* Svarūpa dāsa, all of whom were based in Purī, were highly regarded by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Śrī Vāsudeva Rāmānuja dāsa had been a friend of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and was well known for his humble demeanor, his distributing Jagannātha *mahā-prasāda* to pilgrims, and his love for chanting *stavas*.[*] After his disappearance *Sarasvatī-jayaśrī* described him as *vaikuṇṭha-prāpta:* having attained to that portion of the spiritual world where the Supreme Lord is worshiped majestically as Nārāyaṇa.

Upon meeting any sadhu, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would first determine which *paramparā* he represented. If in reply to the question, Under whose guidance do you serve Kṛṣṇa? a sadhu claimed, "I am directly connected to Kṛṣṇa," Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would later confide to his disciples, "That man has no devotion." Moreover, he did not take *prasāda* at the ashrams of sadhus whom he considered not genuine.

Nine

Indian Independence Movement

Rejecting imperial propaganda that they should be grateful and loyal to their masters, Indians were determined to no longer be the jewel in the crown of British egoism.[*] The demand for *svarāj* (self-rule) dominated Indian political and intellectual life to the degree that most educated Indians, particularly in Bengal, considered the struggle for independence to be a religious and axiomatic duty. Incensed by continuing atrocities and having despaired of achieving their goal through diplomacy, many young men swore vengeance and took up firearms.

Curiously, for many *svarāj* activists, the zeal to revoke foreign rule was accompanied by an eagerness (seemingly even greater than that of the British) to enslave India to Western ideas and culture—whereas Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura cared little who ruled, but stood for independence of thought. He strove to free not only India from the yoke of Western empiricism, but the entire universe from all forms of restrictive thought and to liberate all living beings in all times, places, and circumstances, by bestowing upon them the highest benediction of understanding Kṛṣṇa as the supreme emperor under whose benign dispensation everyone in His creation could live amicably without strife between individuals and nations. Thus Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's freedom struggle was infinitely more expansive, noble, and meaningful than that for theoretically releasing tiny little India from its temporary and ultimately inconsequential political bondage, and demonstrated that he was already independent from the sway of popular thinking and did not need any political machinations to become liberated. His position was: "The Gauḍīya Maṭha does not stand for geographical, political, or social India. It is the exponent of spiritual India, which is categorically different from any country of the world."[1]

To Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura *svarāj* was not an issue, except as a platform for preaching about the folly of identifying one's destructible body with the land in which it had happened to take birth. He did not see a vast difference between East and West, merely different modes of forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa. Showing neither special favor nor dislike to Indians or their apparent suppressors, he saw both the rulers and the ruled as caught up in mistaken self-interest. He offered the best service to all by giving knowledge of *ātma-dharma* (the soul's need), whereby one can transcend the foolishness of thinking himself Eastern or Western. As he observed, "Even a millionth of the great favor bestowed upon people of this world by Vaiṣṇava dharma cannot be attained through millions of years of political maneuvering. We do not instruct people to become parochial and sectarian like politicians."[2] Yet being deeply mired in bodily consciousness and raging over ephemeral territorial concerns, few people were ready to accept his gift.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī continued Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's policy of cooperation with the raj, appreciating that India had become stable by its rule and freed from the difficulties of previous Muslim domination. His divaricating from the ever-mounting disaffection for the

British was not a political expedient; rather, his approach was to remain aloof from politics and respect whoever held power. If the rulers did not interfere with him, why should he wish to unseat them? Pragmatically also, he did not presume that an indigenous Indian government would necessarily be any better. Personally and through his leading representatives, he explained to officers of the Crown that in Indian culture it was the duty of kings to protect sadhus, and of sadhus to bless kings, pray for their welfare, and advise them on benevolent governance. A *Harmonist* report typified the Gauḍīya Maṭha's allegiance to the crown:

> On May 6, in connection with the celebrations of the silver jubilee of the reign of Their Majesties the King Emperor and the Queen Empress, a huge *saṅkīrtana* procession under the lead of the *tridaṇḍa-sannyāsīs, brahmacārīs,* and devotees of the Calcutta Gauḍīya Maṭha paraded the principal streets of Calcutta, starting from the Gauḍīya Maṭha at 4:00 p.m. At 8:00 p.m. a congregational prayer was conducted at the Sārasvata Auditorium of the Maṭha by the President Ācārya, invoking blessings on Their Majesties King George V and Queen Mary, and speeches were delivered in support of the religious policy of the Crown, which is the basis of all permanent wellbeing.[3]

And for this silver jubilee of "Pañcam George" (as he was known in Indian vernaculars) a special deluxe edition of the *Nadia Prakash* was published, featuring photos of the king and queen throughout their reign.

The British reciprocated by extending full support and protection for Gauḍīya Maṭha activities, in contrast to the often hostile or tense dealings they had with other Indian organizations. For example, for Govardhana-*pūjā* at Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha in 1934, the devotees had made a big hill of rice and other *mahā-prasāda* in the *nāṭya-mandira.* When local ruffians forcibly entered and rushed forward to snatch the *mahā-prasāda* before the function was complete, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had devotees haul it up to the gallery with ropes. The gang retaliated by throwing stones. Police soon arrived to dispel the mob, and later went door to door in the area, warning people not to disturb the Gauḍīya Mission. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura expressed his gratefulness in a *Nadia Prakash* report, commenting that the British were helping the Gauḍīya Maṭha.

Similarly, Sir George Frederick Stanley, governor of Madras Presidency, promised to extend to the Gauḍīya Maṭha in South India all governmental help and facilities as were accorded to Christian missionaries. Accompanied by a large retinue, Sir George also laid the foundation stone for the Kṛṣṇa-kīrtana Hall, the first building of the Madras Gauḍīya Maṭha.

Not surprisingly, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's outlook drew considerable opposition from his seditious contemporaries. Advocates of *svarāj* griped that his preaching of Vaiṣṇava dharma, with its emphasis on submission and humility, promoted a "slave mentality" that would extinguish the revolutionary spirit. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī replied to such claims in a lecture at Dacca University titled "The Gauḍīya Maṭha Stands for the Dignity of the Human Race," declaring that slave mentality appertaining to the Supreme Lord is required, and that those who do not serve Him remain eternal slaves to their marauding senses.[4]

To the argument that since no one would listen to the message of a feudal nation, independence should come first and homilies later, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī retorted that Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti* is not dependent on who ruled, and is so exclusively important that it cannot wait for any political transition. Furthermore, "real and eternal *svarāj* can be based only on the Absolute Truth,"[5] and "complete reliance on the transcendental Absolute Truth is by far the highest form of freedom."[*] He likened nationalists to impersonalists, for both spoke of high ideals but were ultimately committed to worldly exploitation. He averred that Indian nationalism, being hand-in-hand with various impersonalists (such as Gandhi and the Ramakrishna Mission), could never benefit India, and was actually her nemesis—as long as such misleading movements remained influential, India would remain condemned.

Yet not all members of the Indian independence movement were against Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Especially many from Bengal and Orissa much appreciated him and his mission. Among Bengali political leaders, Chittaranjan Dāsa in particular respected Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's precepts.

During the summer of 1926 a preaching party headed by Sundarānanda Prabhu went on invitation to a religious gathering in Narma village of Midnapore District. On the first day, before they were to speak, a group of local men came to their lodgings to propose that they lecture wearing *khādi* cloth, the simple homespun variety that Gandhi promoted for breaking the monopoly of the Manchester mills and which had become symbolic of the independence struggle. The Gauḍīya Maṭha representatives responded, "We are simply beggars at the lotus feet of pure devotees attached to serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Our only commitment is to broadcast the message of Godhead door to door throughout the world. In the course of our wanderings we are willing to don whatever cloth noble-hearted householders might donate. We are not against wearing *khādi* if given to us. We are attached only to Kṛṣṇa, not to wearing or not wearing *khādi.* Furthermore, we maintain that the whole universe is the Supreme Lord's property and that consideration of 'my country' is infantile petty-mindedness. Any place where atheists reside we view as foreign, and we accept as home anywhere within the universe where pure-hearted devotees of the Lord extol His glories."

Gandhi

Despite Mohandas ("Mahatma") Gandhi's international acclamation as a saint, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī saw him primarily as a worldly politician lacking true spiritual insight and therefore incapable of providing ultimate benefit to those he professed to help; indeed he deemed that many of Gandhi's ideas were actually opposed to genuine scriptural understanding. For instance, notwithstanding his daily public prayer meetings and readings of *Bhagavad-gītā,* Gandhi considered the *Gītā* merely allegorical, and Kṛṣṇa an extraordinarily religious yet imperfect person whose status of perfect incarnation developed as an aftergrowth.[6] Similarly, he hijacked the principle of *ahiṁsā* (nonviolence) and engaged it for transient political purposes.[7]

Gandhi's horizon encompassed far more than stratagems for achieving political independence; he aimed to reform Indian society of the diverse iniquities and disparities that plagued it. One of his main concerns was to eradicate untouchability—the notion of upper-caste Hindus that to merely touch an "untouchable" was ritually contaminating and could be counteracted only by elaborate purificatory procedures. This extreme manifestation of caste consciousness subjected members of a wide range of groups outside the caste system to severe social disabilities due to their deemed untouchability.[*] Attempting to uplift their status, Gandhi crusaded for temple entry for untouchables and renamed them *harijanas* (God's people)—which in popular parlance inevitably came to connote the same pejorative as had the previously used terms. But in Gauḍīya Maṭha circles the term was unreservedly used in its original sense, to indicate a devotee of Kṛṣṇa. Gandhi speculated that the wretchedness of the lowborn and poor must automatically endear them to God, but Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura countered that a genuine *harijana,* by his *bhakti,* is truly dear to Kṛṣṇa and thus to be respected by all and never deemed untouchable, regardless of his birth. He pointed out the impropriety of endeavoring to boost the social standing of outcastes by rubber-stamping them *harijanas* yet being unable to practically elevate them, whereas the Gauḍīya Maṭha was enacting the genuine method of raising people to the level of *harijanas* by accepting without consideration of background all sincere persons and training them in Hari-*bhakti.* Thus, that which Gandhi failed to achieve by social and political means, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura effected by a spiritual process, as a corollary of his giving factual knowledge of the soul.

Facing stiff opposition from orthodox Hindus, in December 1932 Gandhi attempted to convene a debate to once and for all resolve the issue of untouchability. The basis for discussion was to be ten questions drafted by himself. The next issue of the *Harmonist* offered a response quite different to that of either the abolitionists or the conservatives and was likely to be unpalatable, incomprehensible, and unacceptable to both, inasmuch as it called for understanding social roles in relation to the spiritual function of servitorship to Viṣṇu.[*]

Another misleading term propagated by Gandhi was *daridra-nārāyaṇa.* Gandhi's acolytes would accost Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and his followers with lines like "Don't waste money on this worship; spend it for *daridra-nārāyaṇa,*" and typically would be told, "*Tasmiṁs tuṣṭe jagat tuṣṭam:* 'If Kṛṣṇa is satisfied then the whole world is satisfied.' Don't take the oil for

Jagannātha's lamps to lubricate your spinning wheel. Everything should be used for Kṛṣṇa."

When some devotees sent by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura invited Gandhi to the Gauḍīya Maṭha, he inquired what their activities were, and on hearing a summary asked, "Do you spin cotton there?" When the devotees replied no, Gandhi retorted, "The spinning wheel is my Bhagavān. If there is no spinning wheel, I won't go."[8 †]

Jānakīnātha and Subhash Candra Bose

Śrī Jānakīnātha Bose was the father of Śrī Subhash Candra Bose, who was world-famous as "Netaji" (respected leader) and as a scourge to British claims on India. Jānakīnātha was celebrated in his own right as an advocate whose reputation spread far wider than his practice in Cuttack. At one time he was chairman of Cuttack's municipal committee, and he did much to promote education in that locality. He later became a member of the Bengal Legislative Council. Jānakī Babu was educated, rich, widely respected, and of religious disposition. Yet he initally had some reservations about Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, which he expressed upon inviting him to his home, for instance: "Why are you erecting new temples in Orissa when many here need renovating?" To this, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī answered, "We require our own places to expound pure Gauḍīya *siddhānta*. In other temples we will not be allowed to speak uncompromisingly." When Jānakī Babu's doubts were thus cleared he happily agreed to donate to the Gauḍīya Maṭha.

While according him suitable respect, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura frankly requested that he no longer take flesh or fish, promising to daily send *mahā-prasāda* to him. Thenceforward until his passing away ten years later, every day Jānakī Babu and family received a tiffin of *mahā-prasāda* from the Maṭha.

Jānakī Babu once pleaded a case for a raja and, in lieu of payment, was given an elephant, which he regularly sent for carrying the deities on Navadvīpa-dhāma Parikramā.

Jānakīnātha's firebrand son, Subhash Candra, born in 1897 as the ninth of fourteen children, was a militant activist of the Indian National Congress, the major political force attempting to dislodge the British. Impelled by Vivekananda's doctrine of action and boldness, he later rebelled against Gandhi's tack of nonviolence, inveighing that it could never be successful. Eventually he went outside India, and with support from Hitler, formed the Indian National Army and led it in attack on British troops in Southeast Asia.[*] Like other secessionists, he gave deferential respect to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī as a sadhu yet stood against him ideologically. He once questioned Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī: "Our country is suffering at the hands of the British. Do you not feel for the national condition? You are holding so many young energetic educated men who would be better engaged in the freedom struggle. Why are you keeping them simply for spiritual pursuits?"

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura answered, "You can take any of these men if they agree to go with you. But if any blood is spilled from them, your entire mission will be razed and your personal reputation spoiled. Do you know which country you belong to? Now you have taken birth in India. In the next life you may be born elsewhere, perhaps even as a Britisher to come and rule here. You need not endeavor to remove the British; they will not remain here forever. In course of time they will automatically leave. It may happen that in the future Indians will go to Britain and rule there. All these things come and go. Why are you so concerned about them? Consider the real aim of life. You want to help your countrymen, yet how many of them can you

maintain in your movement? Bring to our mission as many people as you can and I will provide them food, residence, clothing—everything. But can you take full responsibility for the complete necessities of even ten men?"

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura continued to forcefully establish his points, concluding each one by posing a question—not one of which Bose could reply to. His closing assertion was that Bose's efforts would not have any actual effect because everything is in Kṛṣṇa's hands: "Only when He sanctions will the British go. Do not take these boys for your petty inferior cause when they have dedicated their valuable lives for superior matters." Bose then offered *daṇḍavat* and left, his purpose unfulfilled. As Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's disciples saw Bose off they heard him comment to his men, "Previously I had scant respect for sadhus, and especially not for Vaiṣṇavas. Yet now I have seen a Vaiṣṇava powerful enough to actually deliver India."[*]

The profuse donations received during the 1931 Theistic Exhibition in Calcutta attracted the attention of Congress workers, who threatened to torch the whole exhibition unless a hefty contribution were handed over for their cause. The devotees suggested that the Congress workers bring their leaders to the Gauḍīya Maṭha to discuss. Netaji himself came, and Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura taught him the *Gītā* philosophy that everything in this world is temporary and everyone takes rebirth according to his consciousness at the moment of death, and thus it was likely that Netaji would be born among his enemies in England and then oppose the very movement he was now heading. Impressed, Netaji admitted that never before had he received such knowledge, and that if he were not already committed to the freedom struggle, he would have joined Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. The Gauḍīya Maṭha kept the funds.[9]

Madana-mohana Mālavīya

Paṇḍita Śrī Madana-mohana Mālavīya was the founder of Banaras Hindu University and a prominent Congress ideologue, respected nationwide as a scholar and moderate *svarāj* activist. Unlike certain nationalistic leaders of that era who appeared to espouse Hinduism for the political platform it afforded, Mālavīya had much taste for *śāstrīya* topics and particularly relished *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* which he was well versed in and often lectured on. In the company of several distinguished persons, he first came to visit Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in 1925 at Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, whereupon he immediately loudly declared, "Today I am blessed, today I am fulfilled. Truly it is my great fortune to have *darśana* of an ideal *mahā-puruṣa.*" After hearing Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura give profuse scriptural evidence substantiating his stand that Vaiṣṇavas are *brāhmaṇas,* that Vaiṣṇava dharma is *sanātana-dharma,* and that *śuddha-bhakti* is the natural proclivity of the soul, Mālavīya was so pleased that he exclaimed, "In Bengal, village to village and door to door, and throughout India and the entire planet, your message must be spread. Due to a famine of preaching genuine Hari-*bhakti,* the country is presently drowned in all kinds of bogus dharmas. Now is the right time to forcefully propagate Hari-*bhakti.* Please tell me when you will give me thousands of *brāhmaṇa* devotees. Tell me when I shall get them from you. I immediately want five thousand disinterested *brahmacārīs* who can distribute Hari-*kathā* door to door from sunrise to sunset."[10]

Shortly thereafter, news of this meeting and the topics discussed were published in several Calcutta newspapers.

Mālavīya visited Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura several times and delighted in discussing scriptural topics with him. Once, upon receiving Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's response to his barrage of abstruse questions, he expressed that hitherto he had been unable to conceive of such deep knowledge of *Bhāgavatam,* or of anyone quoting so many verses thereof to support each level of exegetical argument.

Once when Mālavīya wanted to submit some intricate philosophical doubts, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī directed him to ask the devotees cleaning the *arcana* paraphernalia. Mālavīya protested, "These are recondite queries on Vedānta that your disciples will not be able to satisfactorily reply to." But Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī insisted that he ask the *pūjārīs*. Thus Mālavīya submissively approached the *pūjārīs,* only to be told, "We're busy polishing these items, so please help us. When we have finished, your inquiries will be answered." Even though he was a famous dignitary, Mālavīya humbly agreed to assist.

After the brass was cleaned, without saying anything more to the *pūjārīs,* Mālavīya returned to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who asked, "Were your questions answered?" Mālavīya replied, "Yes, even without discussion. When I was polishing the Lord's paraphernalia the explanation automatically came to my mind." Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura responded, "Yes. Kṛṣṇa consciousness can be approached by a service attitude, not by any amount of intellectualism. *Sevonmukhe hi jihvādau.* Merely reading books and reciting scriptural verses will not help.

Those who serve are blessed to understand. Serving Godhead will reveal all answers to questions on *śāstra*. My *gurudeva* could not even sign his own name, yet all *ślokas* and *siddhāntas* came to his mouth because he was *sevonmukha*."[*]

On another occasion, when Mālavīya came to ask about idol worship, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī again told him to ask the *pūjārīs*. So Mālavīya asked one *pūjārī* why he was worshiping stone idols, and was told that those whose eyes are like stone cannot see the Lord as He is. The *pūjārī* then gave an elucidation based on the stanza *premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena:* "Pure devotees, their eyes smeared with the ointment of love of Godhead, incessantly behold the Supreme Lord within their hearts."[*] Mālavīya then returned to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and declared, "I want hundreds of thousands of such sadhus who can make India truly independent."

Another time, when relating the activities of the Gauḍīya Maṭha to Mālavīya, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura told him, "We publish six journals, including *The Daily Nadia Prakash*." An astonished Mālavīya inquired how it was possible to produce a daily newspaper about spiritual subjects. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura then explained:

> This universe is like a mustard seed among trillions of universes, and in each universe there are trillions of planets. This earth is one of them, on which there are so many cities. In each city there are so many daily papers each having so many editions. The whole material world is only one fourth of the Supreme Lord's creation. If in one insignificant city there is so much news for people to read, then from the three-fourths manifestation, the spiritual world, we can overflood the populace with knowledge and information. But unfortunately we have no customers.[11]

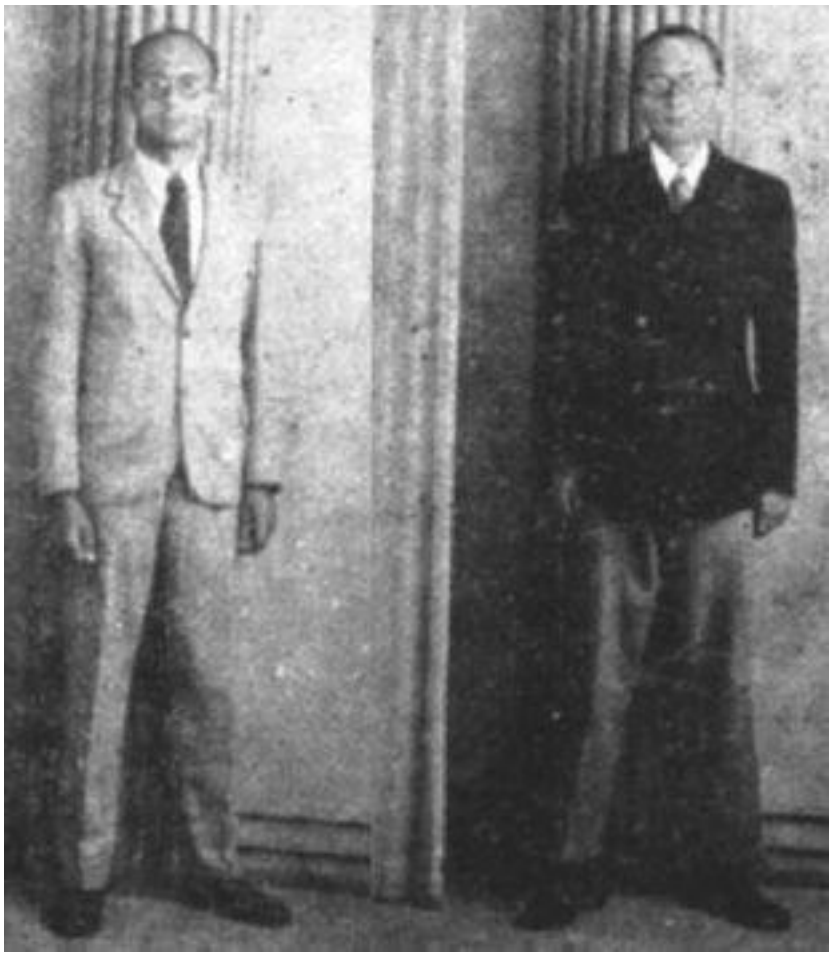
Oṁ Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

Svāmī B.P. Tīrtha and Svāmī Bon in London

Saṁvidānanda Prabhu

Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī with Lord Zetland, London, 1934

Bon Mahārāja with Lord Zetland, in England



Baron H.E. von Koeth and Ernst Georg Schulze

Sadānanda dāsa Brahmacārī (Ernst Georg Schulze)

Bon Maharaja and German devotees upon arriving in Bombay. *Far right,* Abhaya Caranaravinda dasa. (p. 45)

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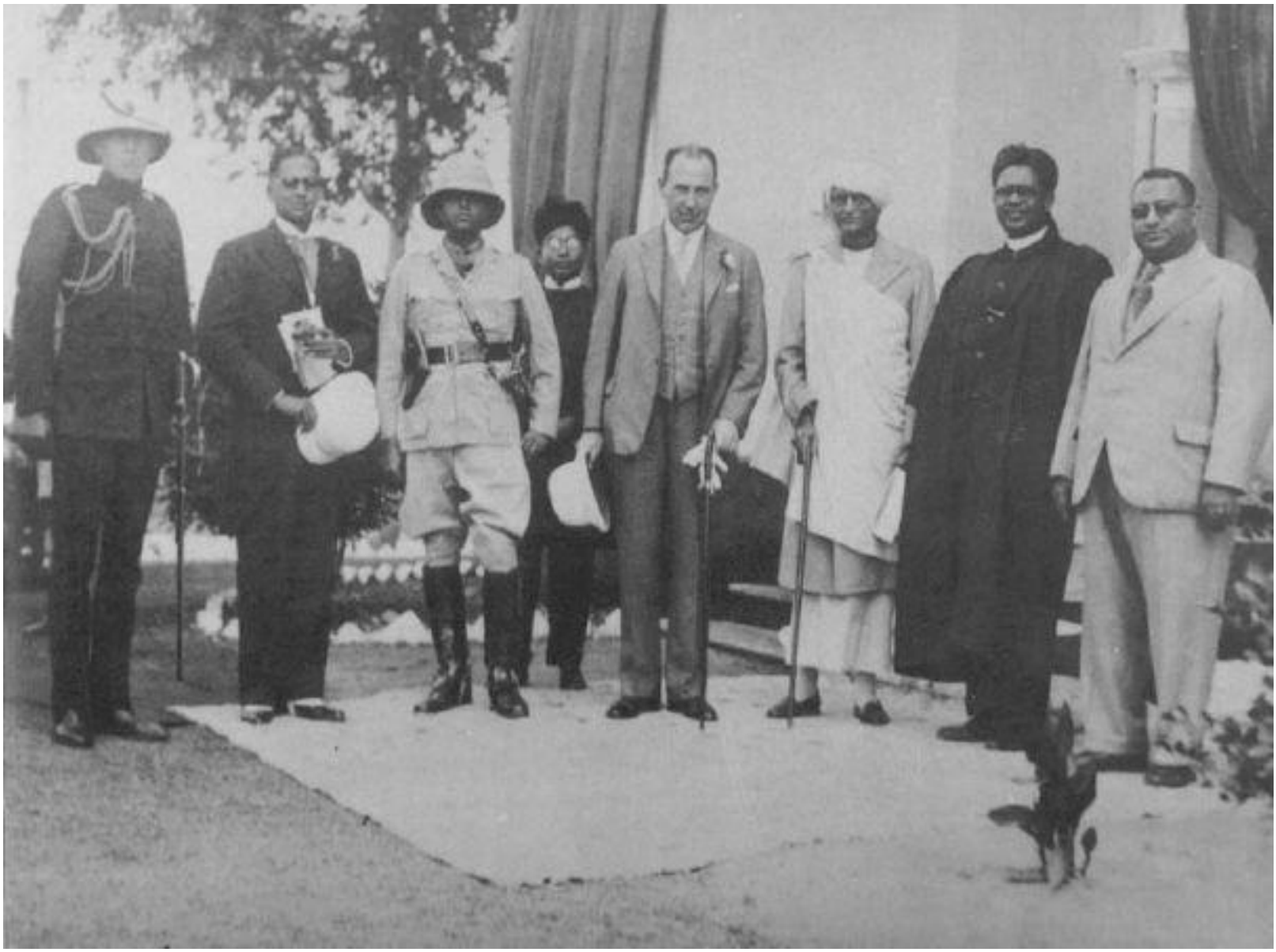

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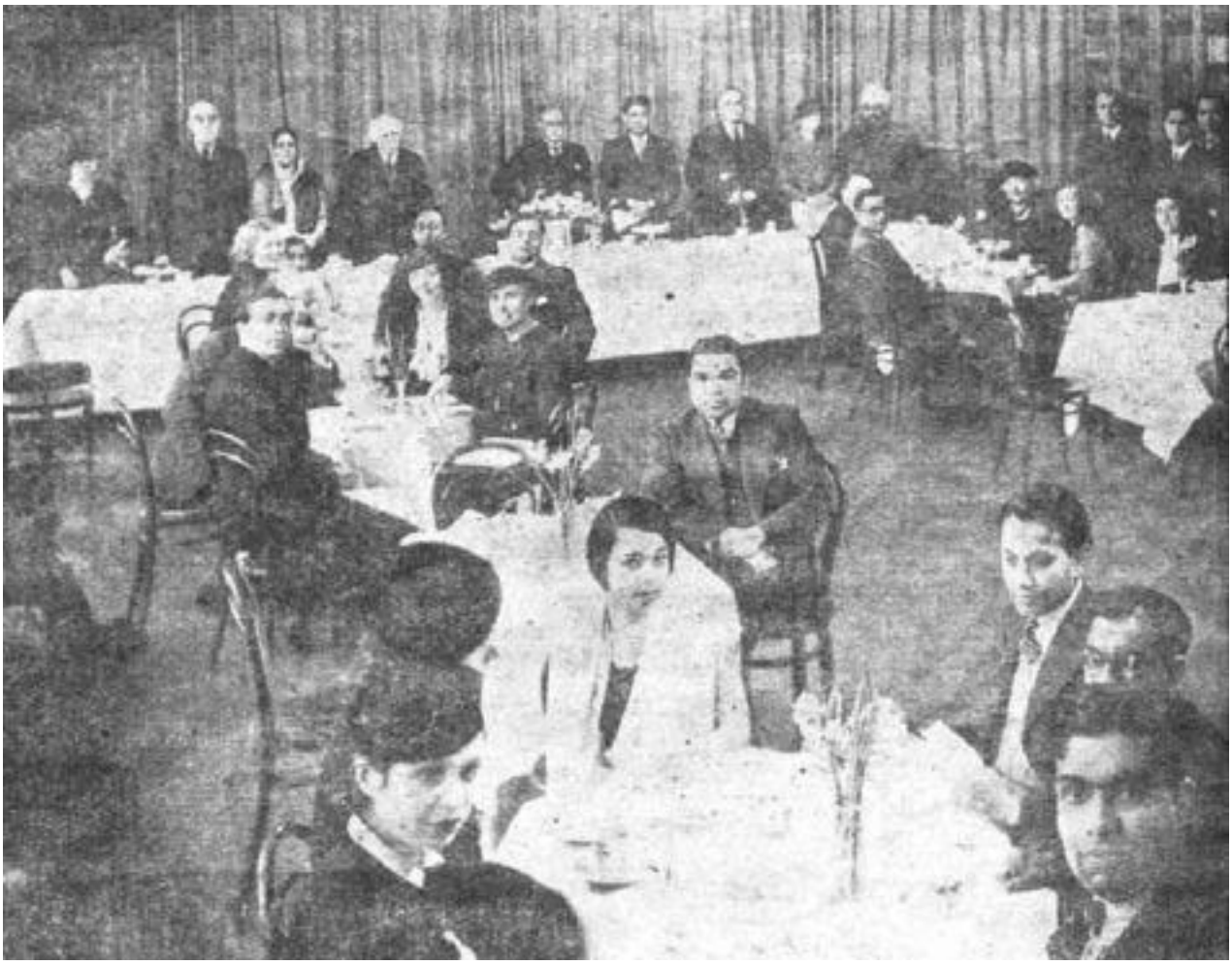
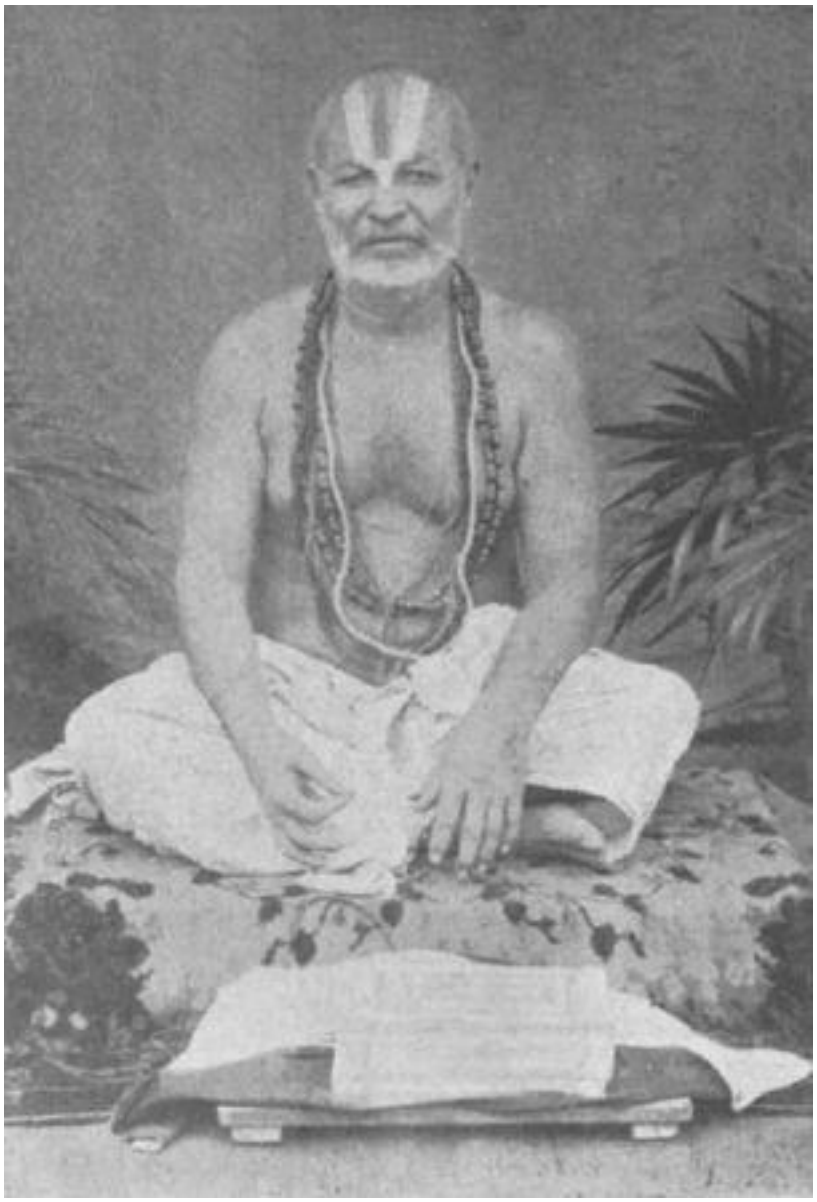


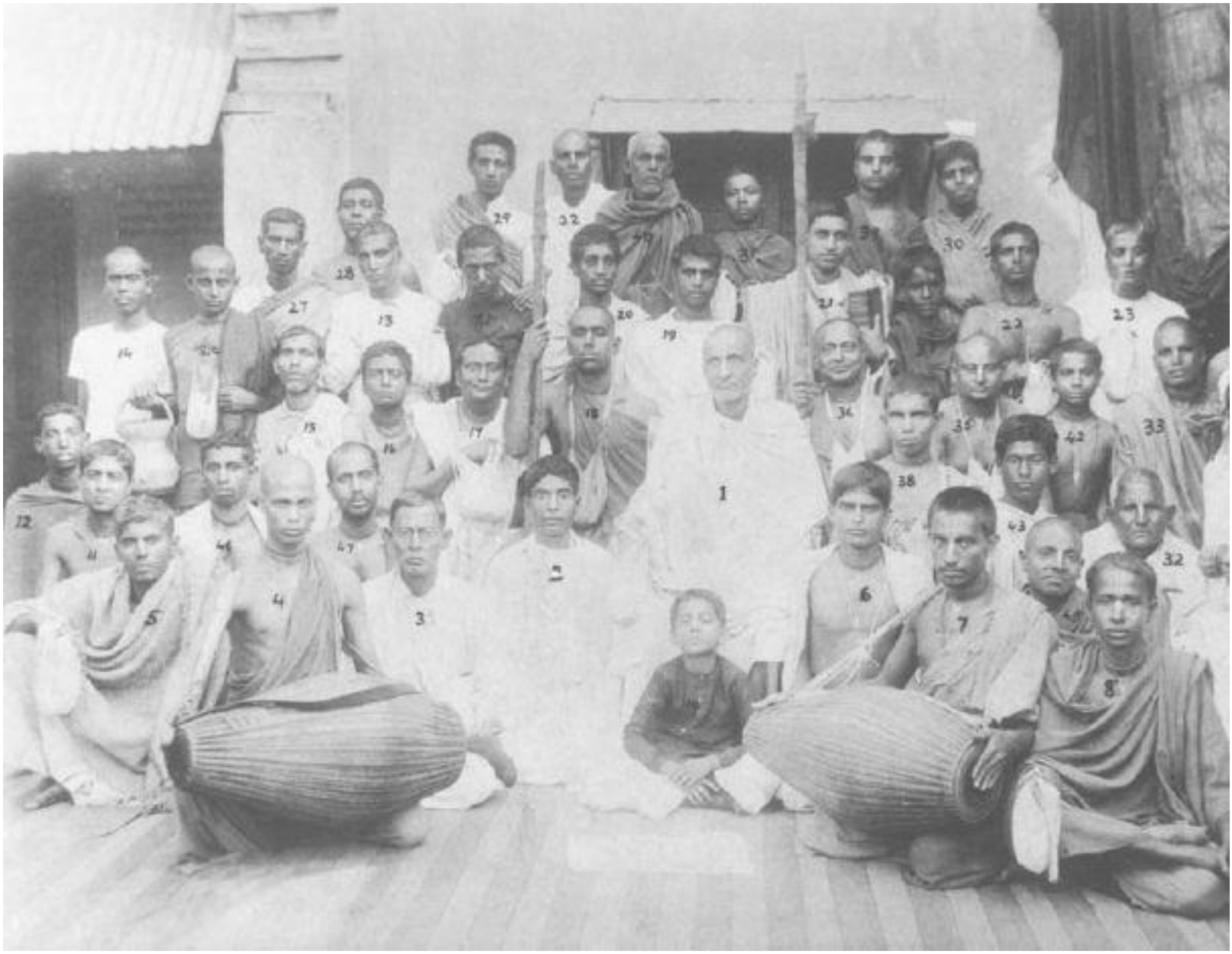
Vyāsa-*pūjā,* London, 12 February 1936

Middle, far left, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī (prior to his taking *sannyāsa*); *top, far right,* Śrī Patita Pāvana Brahmacārī (later named Śrīmad B.K. Auḍulomi Mahārāja).



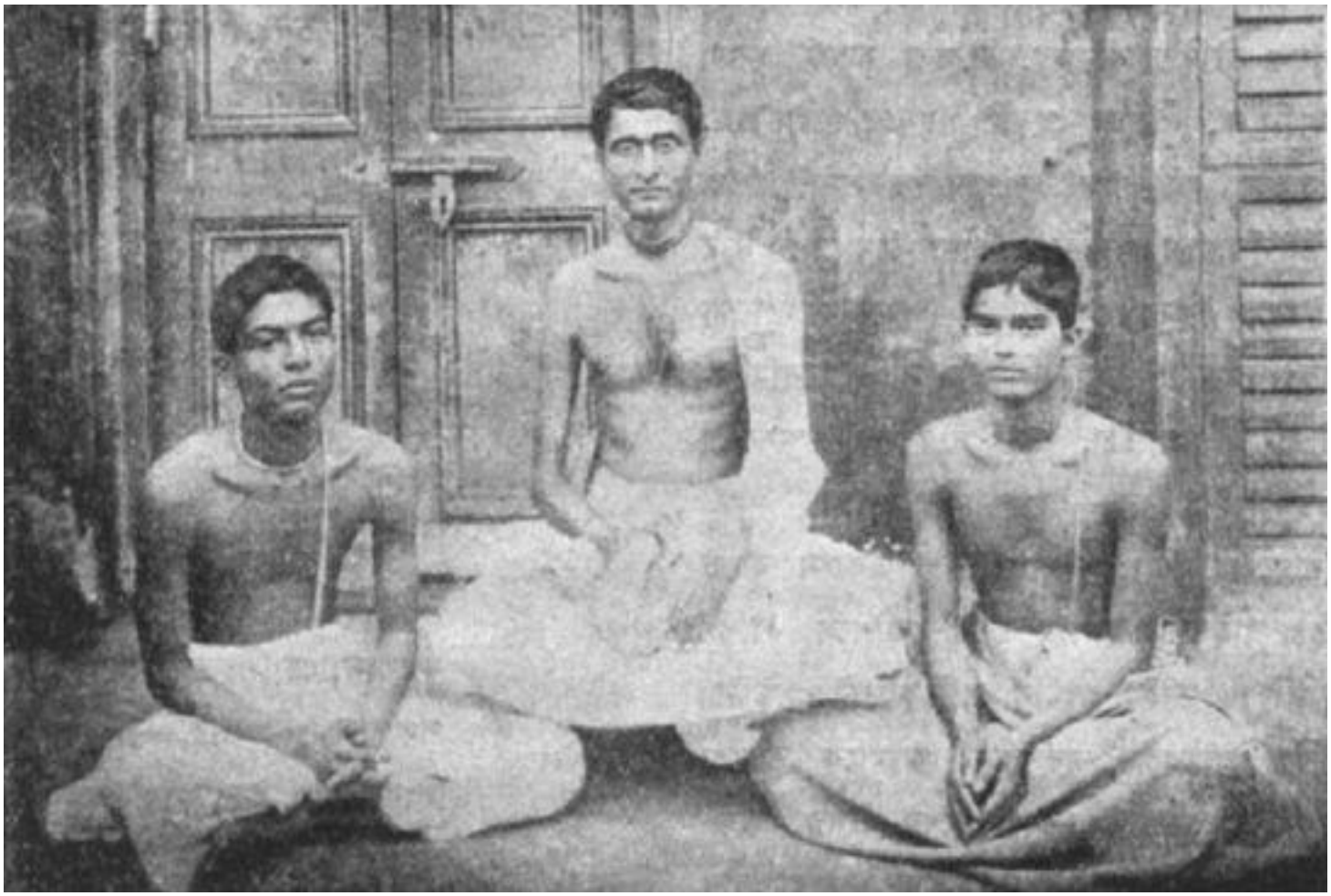
Siddha Mahātmā Vāsudeva Rāmānuja dāsa

Śrī Viśvambharānanda-deva Goswami



At Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, 7 February 1924

1) Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura; 2) Kuñja Bihārī; 3) Satīśa Babu; 4) Jānakī; 5) Rāsa Bihārī; 6) Paramānanda; 7) Devakīnandana; 8) Narahari; 9) Śrīśa-candra; 10) Ravi; 11) Śrīdhara; 12) Siddha-svarūpa; 13) Mādhavendra; 14) Mukunda Vinoda; 15) Kāmadeva; 16) Kirīṭi-bhūṣaṇa; 17) Vidyāratna; 18) Viveka Bhāratī; 19) Caitanya dāsa; 20) Maṅgala; 21) Sundarānanda; 22) Narottama; 23) Avidyā Haraṇa; 24) Akiñcana; 25) Hari Vinoda; 26) Kīrtanānanda; 27) Bhujaṅga-bhūṣaṇa; 28) Atīndriya; 29) Hṛdaya Caitanya; 30) Rāma Vinoda; 31) Sajjanānanda; 32) Bhakti Vijaya and Madana Mohana; 33) Prakāśa Araṇya; 34) Piyārī Mohana; 35) Svarūpa Purī; 36) Pradīpa Tīrtha; 37) Nitya Prakāśa; 38) Vāsudeva; 40) Vilāsa Parvata; 41) Kali-vairī; 42) Gaura dāsa; 43) Samvidānanda; 44) Baṅka Bihārī; 45) Dhanyātidhanya; 47) Aprākṛta.



Śrī Kuñja Bihārī Vidyābhūṣaṇa, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī, and Śrī Paramānanda Vidyāratna, 1916 or 1917

During the inauguration of the exhibition at Śrī Mādhva Gauḍīya Maṭha, Dacca

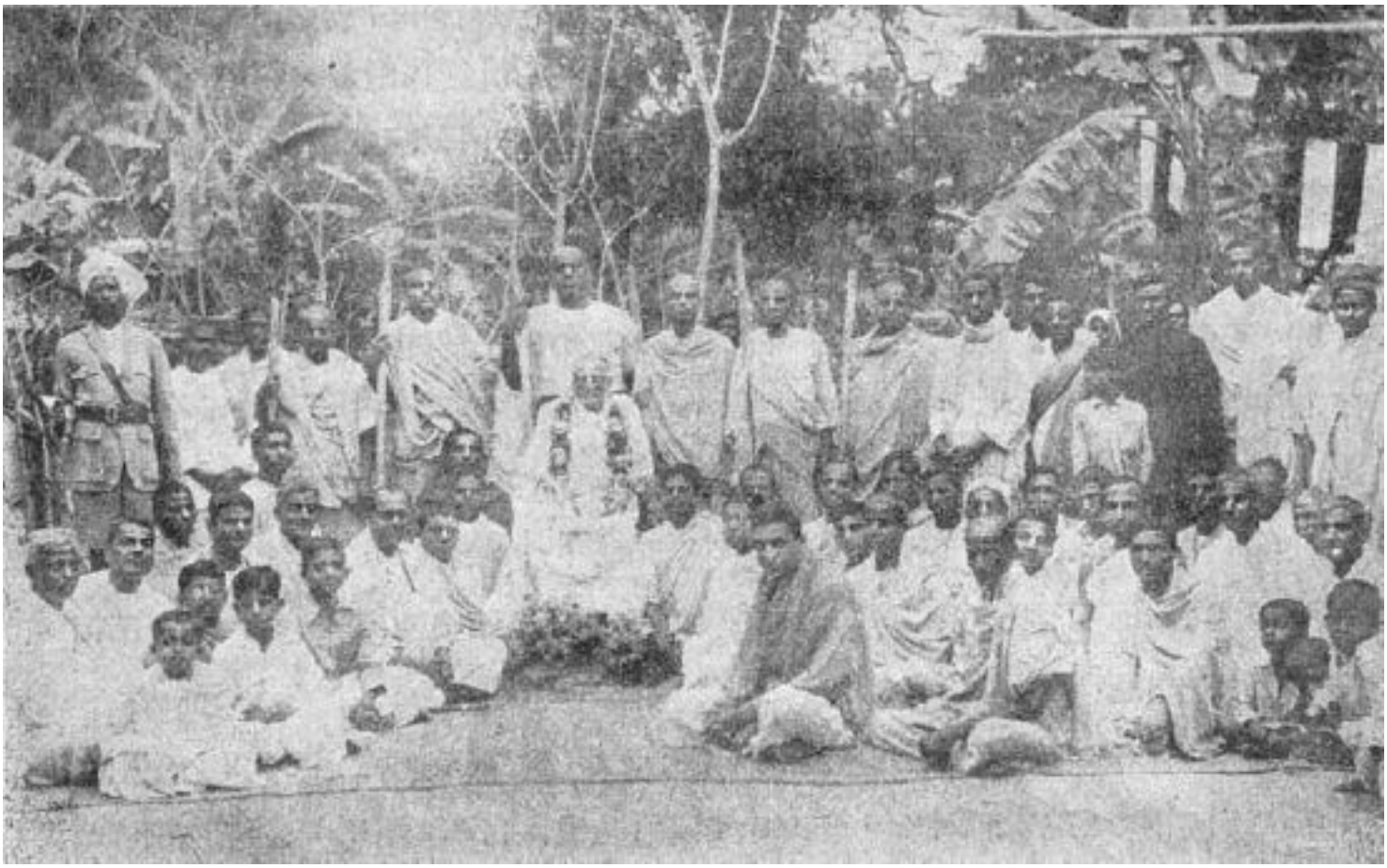
In the courtyard of Saccidānanda Maṭha, Cuttack.

Top: Cintāmaṇi Babu's son, Cintāmaṇi Babu (with folded hands), an Assamese devotee, Śrīpada Sajjanānda Brahmacārī.

Middle: Śrī Nityānanda Brahmacārī, Bhakta Rasika, an Assamese devotee, Śrīpāda Pyārī-mohana Brahmacārī, Śrīpāda Tīrtha Mahārāja, Śrīpāda Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda Prabhu, Śrīpāda Vaikhānasa Mahārāja, Śrīpada Kṛṣṇānanda Brahmacārī, Śrī Jati Śekhara Brahmacārī, Śrī Aniruddha dāsa Adhikārī, Ghanaśyāma Babu.

Bottom: Śrī Kṛṣṇa-kānti Brahmacārī, Paṇḍita-vara Śrīpāda Ananta Vāsudeva Paravidyābhūṣaṇa Prabhu, Śrīpāda Aprākṛta Bhakti Sāraṅga Prabhu, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, Śrī-yukta Gopāla Candra Praharārāja, Professor Śrīpāda Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu, Śrīpāda Paramānanda Vidyāratna Prabhu.

In Prayāga, October 1931



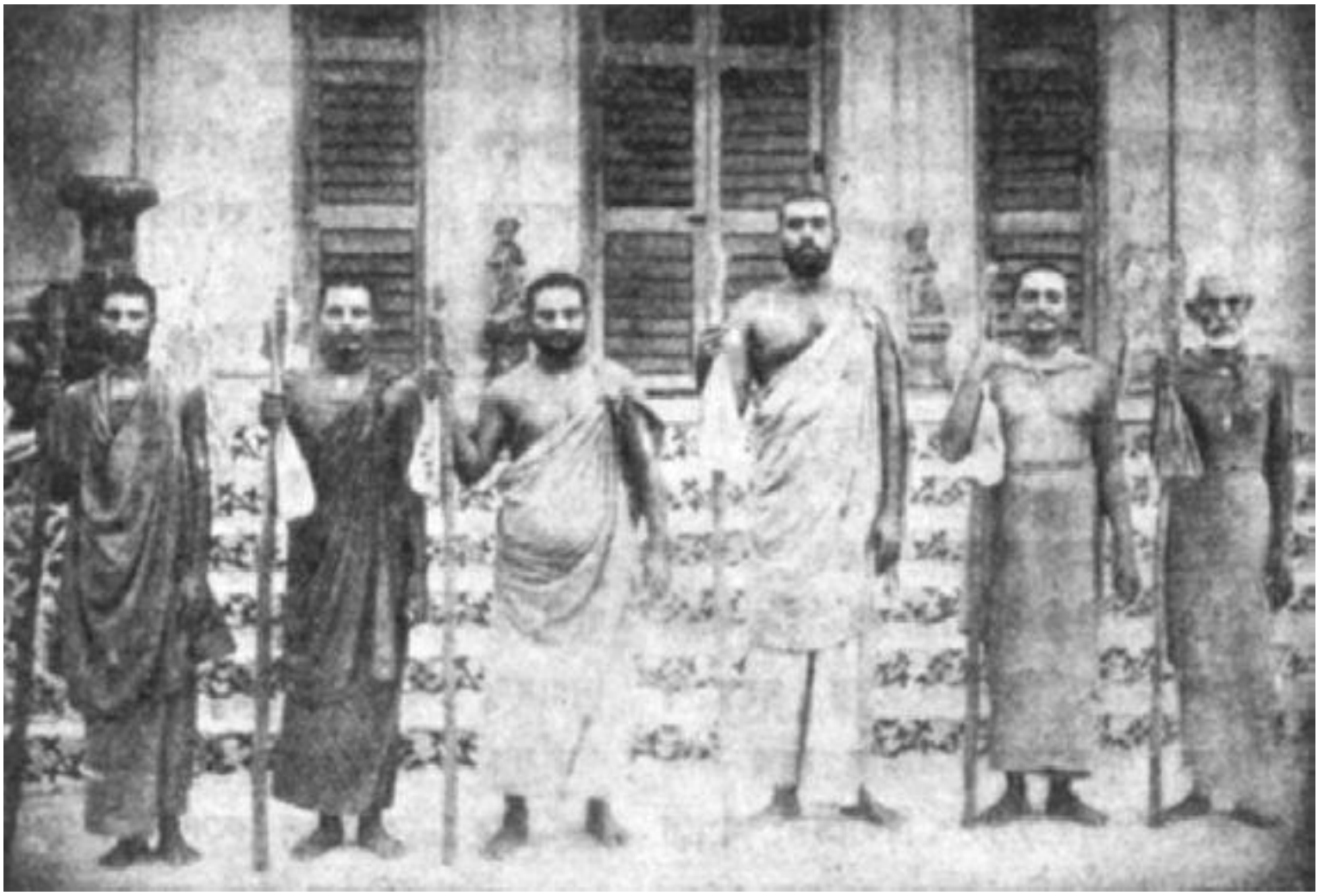
At Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu's family home, Jessore District, March 1934

At Śrīpāda Adhokṣaja Prabhu's home, in Banaras, during the time of preaching at the Hindu University.

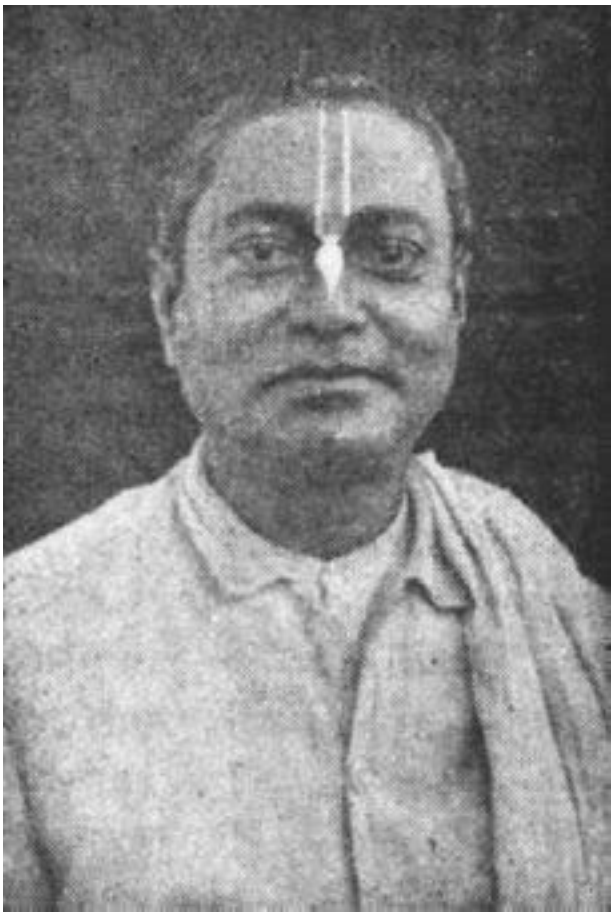
Top: Śrī Ananta Vāsudeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, Ācāryatrika Śrī Kuñja Bihārī Vidyābhūṣaṇa, Śrī Paramānanda Brahmacārī, Śrī Adhokṣaja dāsa Adhikārī.

Middle: Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, Śrī Kīrtanānanda Brahmacārī.

At Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Calcutta



Some *tridaṇḍa-sannyāsis* of the Gauḍīya Maṭha. Śrīmad Bhakti Vijñāna Āśrama Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhakti Prakāśa Araṇya Maharāja, Śrīmad Bhakti Svarūpa Purī Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhakti Viveka Bhāratī Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhakti Pradīpa Tīrtha Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhakti Vilāsa Parvata Maharāja.



Śrī Bhakti Pradīpa Tīrtha Mahārāja

Śrī Bhakti Pradīpa Tīrtha Mahārāja

Śrī Bhakti Hṛdaya Bon Mahārāja

Śrī Bhakti Śrīrūpa Purī Mahārāja

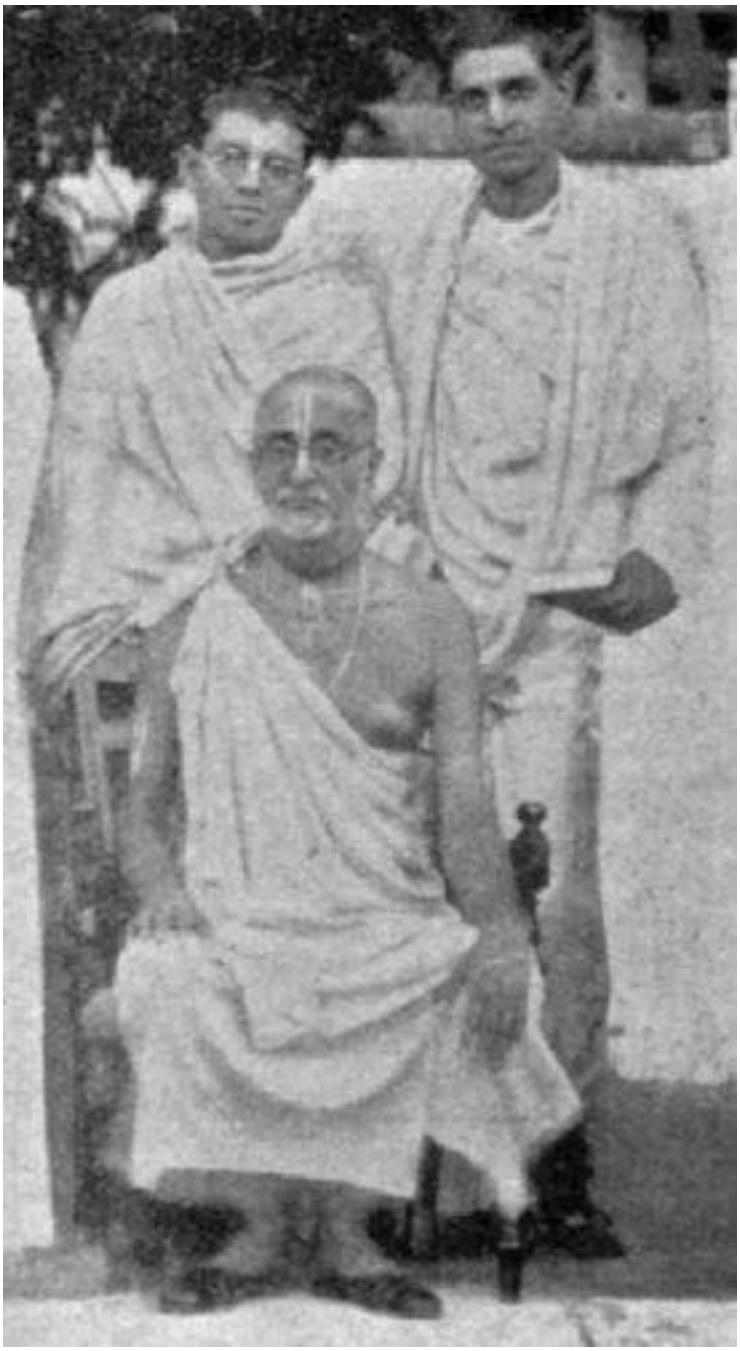
Śrī Bhakti Vicāra Jājābar Mahārāja

Śrī Rādhā-Govinda Bābājī

Śrī Aprākṛta Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī

Śrī Indra Nārāyaṇa Candra Bhakti Bhūṣaṇa

With Śrī Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu

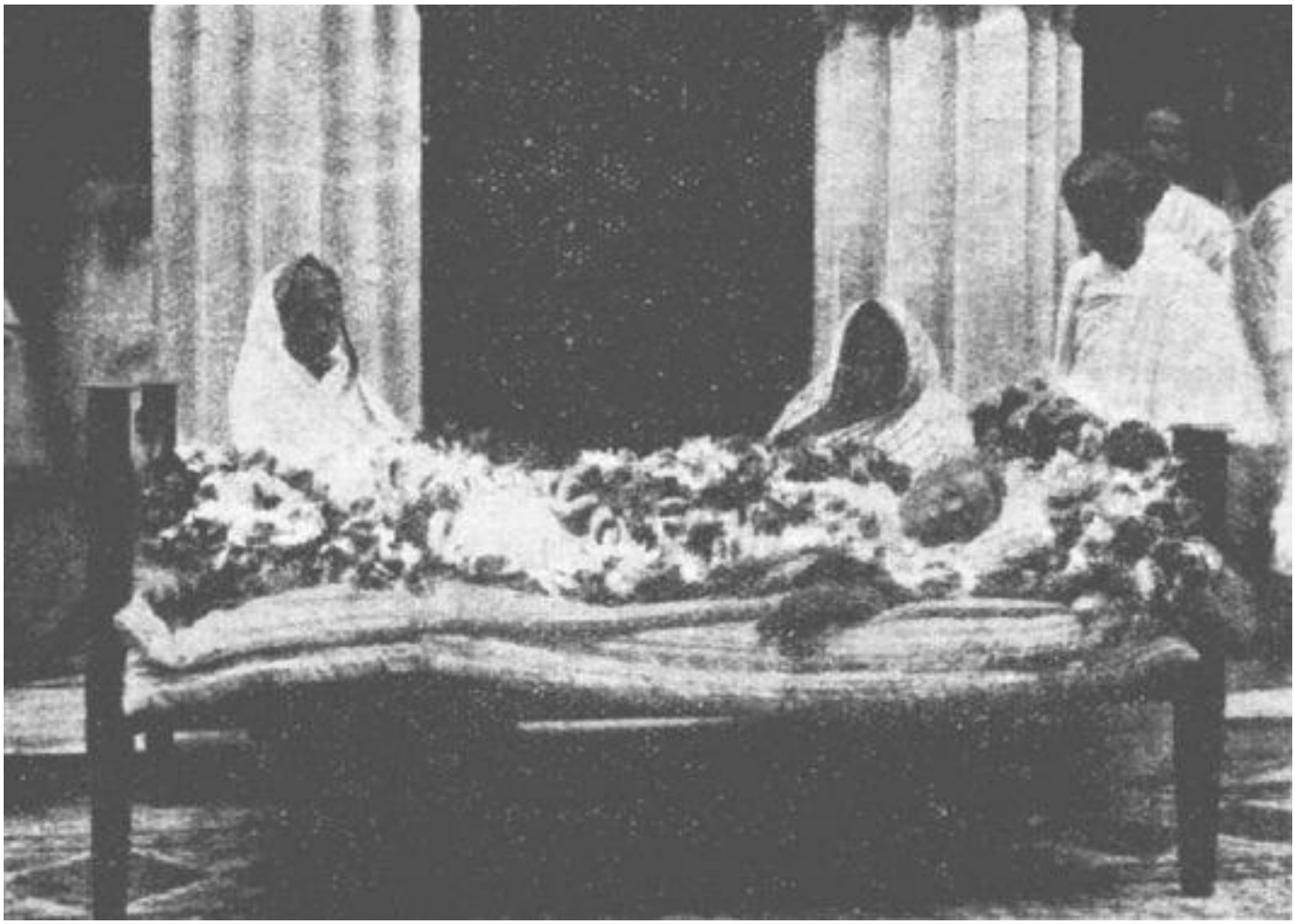


With Śrī Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu and Śrī Sundarānanda Prabhu

Bhāgavata-janānanda Prabhu's final journey

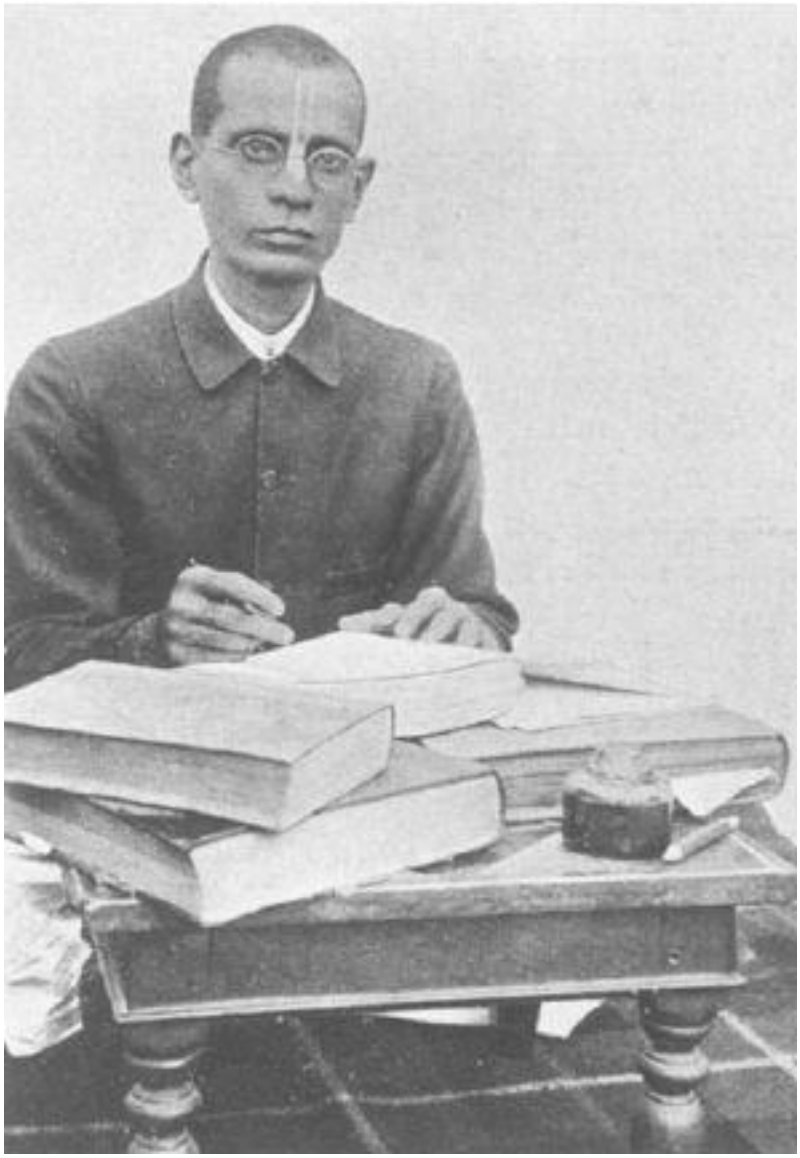
Śrī Jagabandhu Bhakti Rañjana Prabhu

Kuñja Prabhu lamenting the departure of Jagabandhu Prabhu



Jagabandu Prabhu lamented by his widows

Jagabandhu Prabhu's last journey



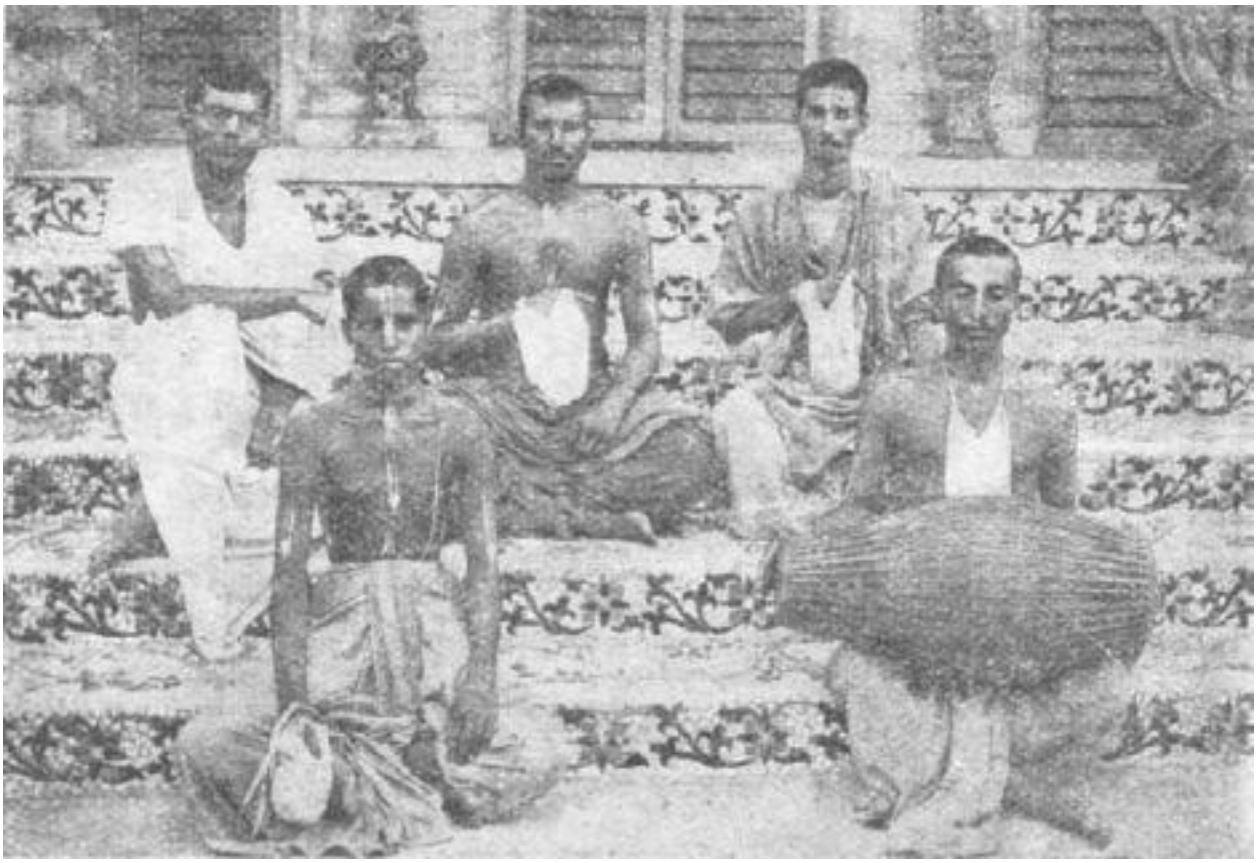
Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu in professors' dress

Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu in professors' dress

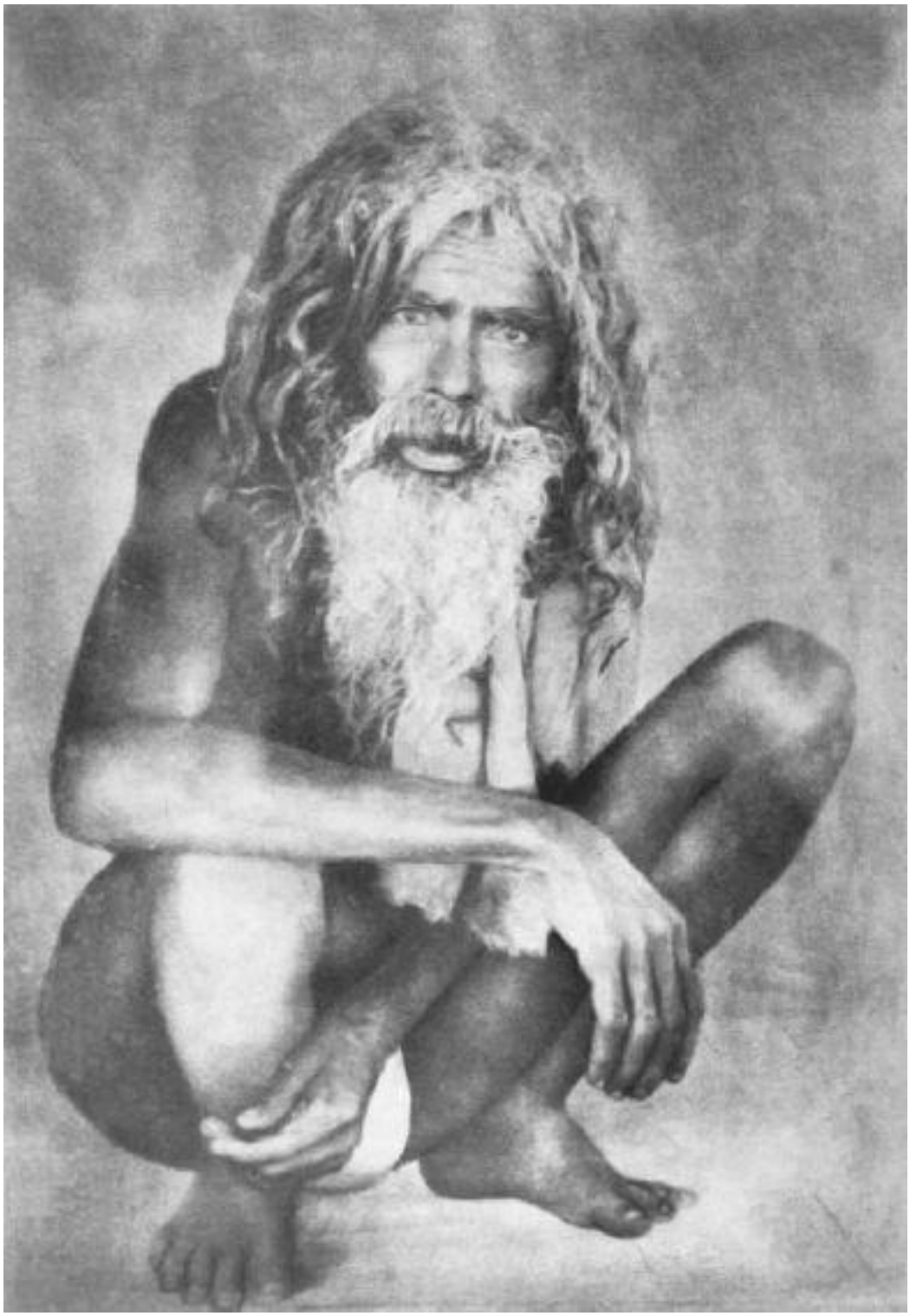
Śreṣṭhyārya Sakhī Caraṇa Bhakti Vijaya Prabhu

Śreṣṭhyārya Sakhī Caraṇa Bhakti Vijaya Prabhu

Brahmacārīs Śrī Rādhā-Vallabha, Śrī Kṛṣṇānanda, Śrī Satyānanda, Śrī Parānanda, Śrī Gaura, Śrī Gaura-guṇānanda



Brahmacārīs Śrī Gaurendu, Śrī Trailokyanātha, Śrī Dhīra Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Jaya Gaurāṅga, Śrī Devakīnandana



Śrī Vaṁśīdāsa Bābājī

Śrī Bhakti Vilāsa Ṭhākura

At Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Calcutta

At Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Calcutta

At Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Calcutta

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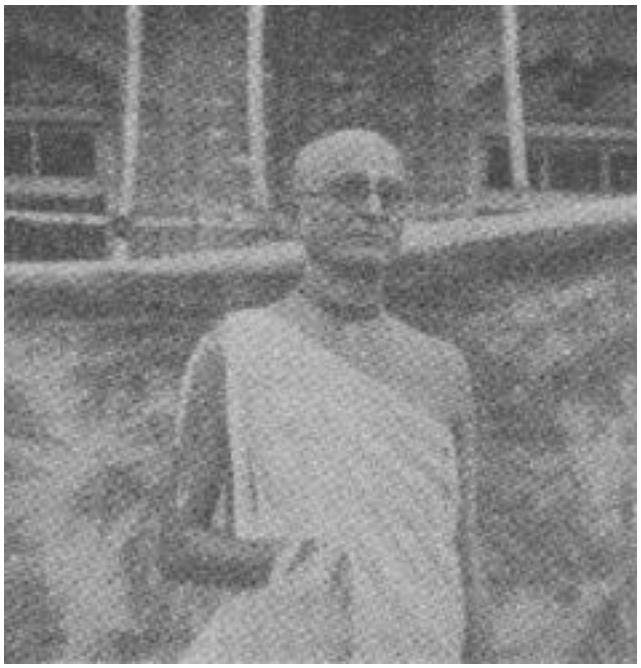

At Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Calcutta

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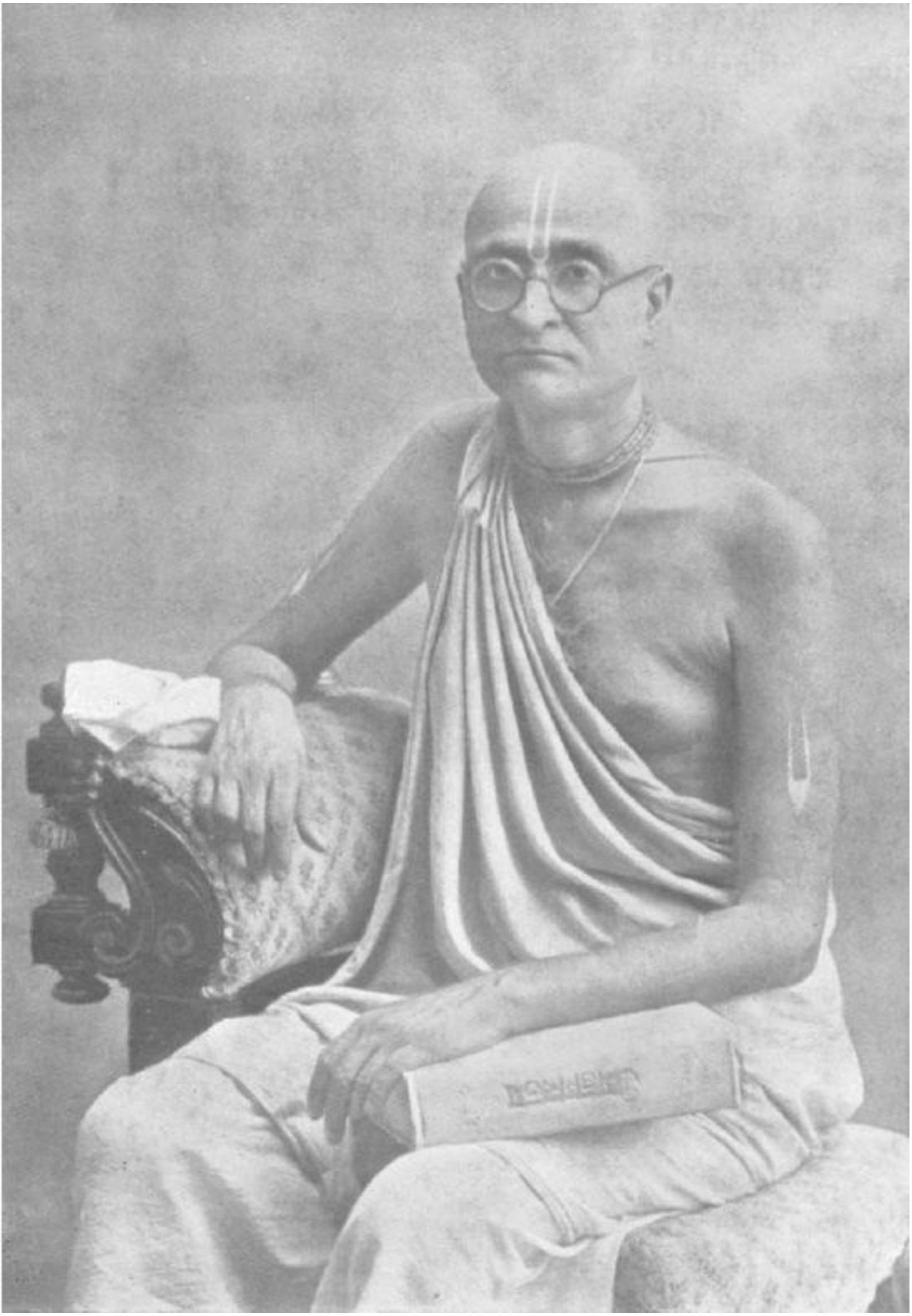
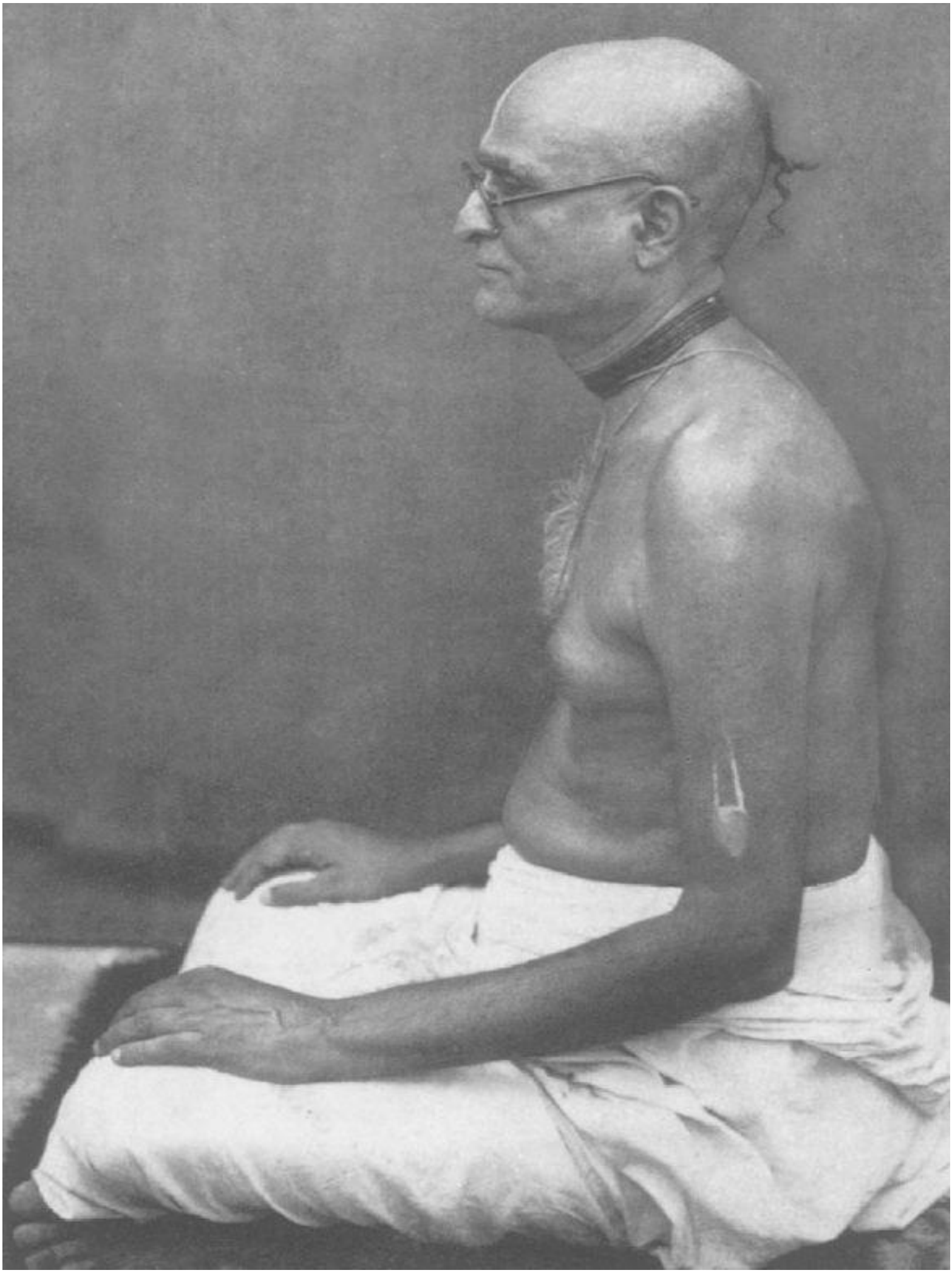


At Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Calcutta



At Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Calcutta

Ten

Deviant Vaiṣṇava Groups

> To consider a nondevotee a devotee, and false *bhakti* as *bhakti,* is simply self-deception. Until one is fortunate enough to serve and respect devotees, he will continue to desire to fabricate that nondevotees are devotees. Can a crow become a peacock simply by wearing peacock feathers? Can a blue jackal become the king of animals?[*] How long can cheating remain covered? The truth will certainly be revealed.[1]

After Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *tirobhāva,* multifarious unauthorized methods of worship were introduced into the Gauḍīya *sampradāya.* These were eagerly taken up by the masses, who readily accepted *bhakti* yet also easily misunderstood it, many seeming to be inclined especially to heretical versions. By the late nineteenth century the original tradition had decayed so lamentably that Caitanya Mahāprabhu's teachings in their pure form had become largely obscured by spurious sadhus and sects, who claimed to be His votaries while diverging in various ways from His actual teachings, thus creating much confusion by introducing methods of *bhakti* nonconformant with those given by standard *ācāryas.* Based on their purported godly revelations, leaders of these miasmic cults exploited common folks' implicit faith in Lord Caitanya and the holy names and hence introduced various gross and subtle distortions into the *saṅkīrtana* movement. Some groups claimed divine dispensation by declaring Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu or one of His principal associates as their founder, while others considered their charismatic leaders reincarnations of Lord Caitanya and His followers. Thus all were deemed *apa-sampradāyas.*

To various degrees all the *apa-sampradāyas* resembled authentic *sampradāyas,* and their members considered themselves *bhaktas.* Yet they were disqualified from *śuddha-bhakti* as defined by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, for in the name of Lord Caitanya they cultivated all that He rejected, namely *karma, jñāna,* and *anyābhilāṣa.* Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had denounced such aberrations, and in great detail had distinguished the pure teachings of Lord Caitanya from those of deviant groups, incisively noting that being motivated by desire for acclaim as advanced spiritualists yet utterly unworthy of such laudations, on the pretext of supporting Vaiṣṇava dharma the members of renegade *sampradāyas* tried their best to pollute it.

Śrī Totārāma Bābājī, a highly respected eighteenth-century devotee of Navadvīpa, had listed thirteen prominent *apa-sampradāyas: āula, bāula, kartābhajā, neḍā, daraveśa, sāṅi, sahajiyā, sakhī-bhekī, smārta, jāta-gosāñi, ativāḍī, cūḍādhārī,* and *gaurāṅga-nāgarī.*[2] [*] A nineteenth-century researcher named Śrī Akṣaya Kumāra Datta was the first of several subsequent scholars to provide more extended lists of Gauḍīya sects; in his *Bhārata-varṣīya Upāsaka S ampradāya* (Sects of worshipers in India) he enumerated fifty-six. Subgroups abounded, mixing elements from various of these sects and also from Islam—especially Sufism, itself considered deviant by orthodox Muslims—Māyāvāda, tantra, and other non-Vaiṣṇava schools. Most being little

organized or structured, these parties were not clearly demarcated.[†] Some identified themselves as Vaiṣṇavas, some only partially, and some hardly at all, other than that by geographic propinquity their practices and beliefs influenced and were influenced by the greater body of Caitanyite Vaiṣṇavism.

Except at the crudest of levels, doctrinal matters and creedal differences between the *apa-sampradāyas* were of little concern to the majority of their current adherents, who, being unlettered and unphilosophical, had scant interest in metaphysical subtleties. In some areas members of certain subsets considerably outnumbered those of others, yet all lived more or less contiguously in an unholy medley of ignorant consensual tolerance and acceptance. Apart from diverse particularities of dogma, ritual, and custom, there was little difference between the miscellaneous legions of degenerate Vaiṣṇavas, as almost all shared much the same outlook in justifying their materialistic modes of worship and masking their loose lifestyles. Nor were those sects that upheld moral values exonerated, for even subtle philosophical incongruity disqualified a suppositive *sampradāya* as heretical. And although much of what Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and the Gauḍīya Maṭha stood for and practiced mirrored teachings and observances current in the *apa-sampradāyas,* the differences between them were yet so chasmal as to cause perennial conflict.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī inherited Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's consistent objecting to any rubric of Vaiṣṇava dharma that did not adhere to *śuddha-bhakti* as defined by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī pinpointed the misconceptions mainly of *apa-sampradāyas* of philosophical leaning, the dissoluteness of the dissolute being self-evident to any minimally decent person. Rejecting even many devotees who seemed advanced, austere, absorbed in *bhajana,* and experiencing higher ecstasies, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī maintained that their *bhāva* could not be wholly pure unless their *siddhānta* was fully correct, for any philosophical error presupposed at least an increment of the spirit to either enjoy Kṛṣṇa or enjoy separately from Him. Due to their maintaining such attitudes, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī considered such *apa-sampradāyas* and their adherents not merely deviated from the path of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, but actually inimical to Him (Gaura-*virodhī*). He compared to Satan those imitative devotees who while claiming to follow Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana were actually against their principles.

Since certain philosophical defects of *apa-sampradāyas* were elusive and discernible only to persons steeped in Vaiṣṇava *siddhānta,* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura analyzed and exposed such tweaking in minute detail. He composed and published in *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* "Prākṛta-rasa-śata-dūṣiṇī" (A hundred refutations of mundane mellows), seventy-eight terse couplets that hammered on misconceptions and malpractices of deviant materially motivated devotees.[*] And he often quoted verses from *Prema-vivarta* that epitomized *apa-sampradāya* derogations:

yadi bhajibe gorā sarala kara nija mana
kuṭināṭi chāḍi' bhaja gorāra caraṇa
gorāra āmi, gorāra āmi, mukhe balile nāhe cale

gorāra ācāra, gorāra vicāra, laile phala phale

If you desire to worship Lord Gaurāṅga, make your mind simple and straightforward. Giving up duplicity, worship the lotus feet of Lord Gaurāṅga. Merely saying "I am Gaura's, I am Gaura's" will not do. Following His example and judgment will bear fruit.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had begun the struggle against *apa-sampradāyas* by upholding Māyāpur as the birthplace of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, by chastising the imposter "avatar" Biṣakiṣaṇa, and particularly by his forceful writings—for instance, stating cheating forms of so-called *bhakti* to be more dangerous than outright atheism, because they appear as *bhakti,* but are not:

Unfortunately in contemporary society, in the name of *śuddha-bhakti* various types of mixed devotion such as *karma-miśrā* (mixed with fruitive action), *jñāna-miśrā* (mixed with speculative knowledge), and *yoga-miśrā* (mixed with yoga processes), as well as various impure and imaginary notions, are spreading everywhere like the germs of a plague. People in general consider these contaminated and mixed approaches to be *bhakti* and respect them as such. Thus they remain deprived of *śuddha-bhakti.* These polluted and mixed conceptions are our greatest enemies. Some people say that there is no value in *bhakti,* that God is an imaginary sentiment only, that man has merely created the image of a God in his imagination, and that *bhakti* is a pestilent state of consciousness, which in no way can benefit us. Though opposed to *bhakti,* such people cannot much harm us because we can easily recognize and avoid them. But those who propagate that *bhagavad-bhakti* is the highest dharma yet behave contrary to the principles of *śuddha-bhakti,* and instruct others against those principles, can be especially harmful, for ultimately they lead us onto a path totally contrary to *bhagavad-bhakti.* Therefore the previous *ācāryas* have scrutinizingly defined the intrinsic nature of *bhakti* and repeatedly cautioned us to avoid polluted and mixed conceptions.[3]

Continuing Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's initiative, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī committed himself to upholding the dignity of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *paramparā* and thus declared war on the *apa-sampradāyas,* vowing to save at least the society of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas from their nefarious influence:

Once *tridaṇḍa-sannyāsī* Śrī Rāmānuja Svāmī of South India, who was an avatar of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, delivered the Vaiṣṇavas of this world from the talons of the worshipers of five gods. Today, by the endeavors of effete servants of the Vaiṣṇavas like us, the religious principles of the scriptures will again be established in Āryāvarta.[*] We are taking refuge of *śrī*-guru and Gaurāṅga in order to deliver Gauḍīya society from the clutches of envious pseudo-Vaiṣṇavas such as *āula, bāula, prākṛta-sahajiyā, neḍā, daraveśa, sāṅi, gaura-nāgarī, jāta-gosāñis,* and false renunciants.[4]

False Gurus

As in many schools of greater Hinduism, in deviant Vaiṣṇava dharma the widespread misinterpretation of scriptural statements indicating the oneness of God and guru had resulted in artificial identification of supposititious gurus as God—which was not only discordant with reality, but also demeaning to the Supreme Lord, and hence was veiled atheism. Yet taking advantage of this bent outlook, and of a culture in which superiors, especially *brāhmaṇas* and gurus, were revered, a class of self-indulgent counterfeit gurus had arisen who requisitioned the privileges and perquisites of guruship without fulfilling either its responsibilities or the pristine ideals of spiritual life. Almost all "gurus" unabashedly declared their own divinity and upheld their "sacred rights," while cloaking *śāstrīya* injunctions stipulating that a guru's godly eminence depends upon his being a genuinely surrendered servant of Godhead.

That gurus were offered utmost respect and worship was in conformity with scriptural injunctions and Vedic tradition, for such aphorisms as *guru-kṛpā hi kevalam* (The guru's mercy is all in all) were part of common lore, as was the parallel understanding that to displease one's guru would engender disaster. As expressed in a popular song:

> *kṛṣṇa ruṣṭa haile guru rākhibāre pāre*
> *guru ruṣṭa haile kṛṣṇa rākhibāre nāre*
>
> If Kṛṣṇa is angry at somebody, his guru can protect him; but if the guru is angry at someone, even Kṛṣṇa cannot protect him.[5 †]

Although such statements were certainly authoritative, their indiscriminate application gave phony gurus leeway to exploit the pliant and obtuse, and such self-serving duplicity soon became institutionalized, each generation imbibing the techniques of guruship necessary for maintaining a profile of respectable saintliness. Thus were begotten seminal *paramparās* of genteel fraud, with gurus not only appropriating a share of their disciples' earnings and basking in their unstinted adulation, but in some cases also enjoying their wives and daughters, by employing the scriptural injunction that all facilities should be offered to one's guru, since the guru is as good as or identical with Bhagavān—and as Bhagavān utilized others' wives, the guru is also entitled to do so. Gurus of the *guru-prasādī apa-sampradāya* were offered the virgin brides of their newlywed disciples for deflowering and thus supposedly sanctifying; gurus of the *śiṣyā-vilāsī apa-sampradāya* kept compliant female disciples for sexual enjoyment under the mantle of religiosity; and yet another sect believed in accepting one's mother-in-law as guru. The *Harmonist* lamented, "It is inexplicable how those gurus who live in open sin contrive nevertheless to retain the unquestioning allegiance of the cultured portion of their disciples."[6]

In Bombay, some irate citizens filed a case against a local Vallabha *sampradāya* "guru" for sexually exploiting his disciples' wives and daughters. When Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī heard about this he commented, "The guru is not an enjoyer of flesh like a tiger or lion. When

śāstra states that you should give all good things to the guru, it means you should give him your soul."[7]

The dichotomy of a guru being worshiped as if divine when clearly he was not, gave rise to a curious cultural phenomenon of complaisant disciples verbally and behaviorally acknowledging their gurus as God-incarnate yet maintaining a mundane view of and actually caring very little for them. Having suspended or never operated their discriminative faculties, gurus and disciples alike were inured to playing their required roles in a shallow and hypocritical farce.

Some non-hereditary gurus—mostly non-*brāhmaṇas* of heretic sects that later formed as outgrowths of the Caitanya cult—compensated their lack of organic claims to divinity by doubling as medicine men and shamans, several deriving mystique from largely mythopoeic healing abilities. Other gurus became maintained dependents of rich disciples, as storytellers cum family priests, in status hardly above the domestic barber and washerman. Being subordinate enjoyers of their keepers and thus unable to instruct them, they were far from being spiritual masters—rather, they were servants of their material masters.

Particularly dangerous was the widely marketed antinomianism that scriptural regulations need not be followed by persons initiated by a guru, his clemency supposedly being sufficient to secure the full blessings of Bhagavān for a sensually comfortable life. Yet by muffling any sincere devotional inclinations of their followers and keeping them fumbling in ignorance, these pretentiously magnanimous personalities succeeded only in denying the credulous masses any opportunity to attain actual Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti.*

Hence a spate of opportunistic false gurus attempted to gather sizeable followings by indulging the whimsical desires of their hypothetical disciples. Such spurious gurus being neither capable nor desirous of giving genuine spiritual instruction, themselves being otherwise motivated, they attracted similarly fulsome people who had no interest in hearing matters that might impinge on their plans for self-centered enjoyment. Although a guru is obliged to deliver his disciples from all dangers, those who accepted such dubious guides were thereby placed into even greater danger. Far from being purified, those who associated with such pseudo-gurus became more fallen.

Taking Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī as another businesslike guru, many persons approached him for material benedictions. Once a wealthy but childless man proposed, "If by your blessings I get a child, I will give you my whole estate."[8]

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had already highlighted the worthlessness of the prevalent mode of initiation: "The modern method of accepting a guru or priest is not the process envisaged by the writers of scripture. Acquiring a guru or priest as a matter of formality, in name only, is as useless as appointing a doll as an advisor."[9] Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī continued to rectify the blight of dissembling guru-ism by vigorously broadcasting genuine knowledge of guru-*tattva*: A true *brāhmaṇa* and guru is known by his qualities, not merely by birth; before taking initiation, a candidate should be convinced that his prospective guru is proficient both in

understanding and explaining scripture and thus able to lift his disciples out of ignorance. A real guru must be of spotless character and have sincere compassion upon fallen souls. He clarified:

> The true guru constantly serves Hari. How can those busy with the maintenance of their wives and children, who give full vent to their desire for enjoyments arising out of illusion, who try to employ Bhagavān, the highest entity to be adored and served, for supplying them fuel for the fire thereof, act as *jagad*-gurus or true instructors of people? Such non-dedicated persons cannot advise others to surrender to Bhagavān. Even if they speak bona fide instructions, such preaching bereft of practical examples in their own conduct is ineffectual.[10]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī explained that although the attitude of giving to the guru was correct, acquisitiveness on the part of the guru was not: "Everything should be offered to the guru. Yet by taking even a morsel for his own sake a guru becomes disqualified and a thief," and would quote:

> *guravo bahavaḥ santi Śiṣya-vittāpahārakāḥ*
> *durlabho sad-gurur devi śiṣya-santāpa-hārakaḥ*
>
> Many gurus are expert in removing their disciples' wealth, but rare is that genuine guru who can remove their suffering.[11]

He averred that due only to a perverse mentality would anyone overlook patently authentic sadhus and accept a charlatan as a spiritual guide:

> Those *asuras* who merely mimic devotees are not cleansed in mind by such counterfeit devotional activities. Thus they accept offenders to the holy names as their spiritual masters. Because they see no way to satisfy their tongue and genitals in association with true chanters of the holy name, they see them as representatives of death, about to strike with the bite of mortality.[12]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura compared false gurus to *śyāmā* plants, which look like and often grow alongside rice paddy yet must be rooted out to protect the genuine crop. He hammered on the point that it is farcical to accept an epicurean or omnivore as a guru, and that one who has done so must either reject him or descend with him into hell. He never tired of contesting these worst cheaters posing as benefactors of the human race, and offered multiple scriptural proofs to support his stance. According to the dictum of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī:

> *vāco vegaṁ manasaḥ krodha-vegaṁ*
> *jihvā-vegam udaropastha-vegam*
> *etān vegān yo viṣaheta dhīraḥ*
> *sarvām apīmāṁ pṛthivīṁ sa śiṣyāt*
>
> A sober person who can tolerate the urge to speak, the mind's demands, the actions of

anger, and the urges of the tongue, belly, and genitals is qualified to make disciples all over the world. (*Upadeśāmṛta* 1)

And from *Bṛhan-nāradīya Purāṇa,* quoted as *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* 2.20.140–41:

prakaṭaṁ patitaḥ śreyān ya eko yāty adhaḥ svayam
baka-vṛttiḥ svayaṁ pāpaḥ pātayaty aparān api

An easily identifiable and shameless sinner slides into depravity alone, whereas a sinful man posing as a saint is far worse because he drags his followers along with him down to the darkest hell.

haranti dasyavo 'kuṭyāṁ vimohyāstrair nṛṇāṁ dhanam
cāritrair atitīkṣṇāgrair vādair evaṁ baka-vratāḥ

Perplexing them with weapons, dacoits steal people's wealth in secluded places. Hypocrites do so through cunning behavior, with exceedingly sharp words.

In response, proponents of caste status by birthright would cite scriptural predictions that in Kali-yuga *śūdras* would become gurus, and thus attacked Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and others who although not of *brāhmaṇa* caste assume the role of guru. As stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam:*

śūdrāḥ pratigrahīṣyanti tapo-veṣopajīvinaḥ
dharmaṁ vakṣyanty adharma-jñā adhiruhyottamāsanam

In Kali-yuga, *śūdras* in the dress of sadhus will accept charity to earn their livelihood. Those who are ill-versed in dharma will sit upon a preceptor's seat and pontificate on religious principles. (SB 12.3.38)

But Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would fling these quotes back at the false gurus. Citing scriptural references that clearly delineated who was qualified to be a guru and who was not, and warning of the calamitous consequences of remaining attached to cheaters posturing as gurus, he demonstrated that by their materialistic mentality those theoretical gurus themselves fitted the description of the *śūdras* referred to therein. He referenced *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* 1.01:

yo vakti nyāya-rahitam anyāyena śṛṇoti yaḥ
tāv ubhau narakaṁ ghoraṁ vrajataḥ kālam akṣayam

Both a supposed guru who instructs a disciple in an unauthorized manner, and a supposed disciple who improperly listens to a guru, will undergo endless suffering in a terrible hell.[*]

From *Mahābhārata, Udyoga-parva* 179.25, he cited:

guror apy avaliptasya kāryākāryam ajānataḥ
utpatha-pratipannasya parityāgo vidhīyate

Despite being known as a guru, a person who is arrogant and ignorant of the distinction between proper and improper action, or has taken to a deviant path, must be wholesale renounced.

And from *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* 4.144:

avaiṣṇavopadiṣṭena mantreṇa nirayaṁ vrajet
punaś ca vidhinā samyag grāhayed vaiṣṇavād guroḥ

A person who receives *mantra-dīkṣā* from a non-Vaiṣṇava is certainly doomed to hell. Therefore, according to the scriptural system, he must again receive the mantras from a properly qualified Vaiṣṇava guru.

He explained:

When sinful persons become extremely offensive by posing as gurus, imagining themselves as such by *ahaṅgrahopāsanā,* they give up *śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana,* the source of complete auspiciousness. They teach the society of idiots ignorant of the absolute truth to pursue profit, adoration, and distinction for fulfilment of personal desires. These sinful persons advertise themselves as Nārāyaṇa or an avatar of the Supreme Lord. And they consider Mahāprabhu and His associates, and also the *mahā-mantra*—which appears as transcendental sound in the form of syllables and is the highest worshipable object for all animate and inanimate beings, and was glorified by Mahāprabhu as nondifferent from Lord Kṛṣṇa—akin to themselves, ordinary mortal forms desiring worldly fame. Following this conception, they induce others to glorify the mundane names or sound vibrations related to themselves or families, houses, and bodies full of stool and worms and destined to become ashes. Guru-*tattva* is indeed a manifestation of Kṛṣṇa, but one must understand the spiritual master to be a manifestation of the supreme worshiper [Śrī Rādhā] rather than the supreme worshipable object Rādhikā-nātha. If one fails to do so, or becomes a singer of imitative doggerel songs contrary to the *mahā-mantra* given by the spiritual master, or if to gain mundane prestige a putative guru declares or induces others to glorify his gross body as being the Supreme Lord, then under the burden of immense sins, both such a cheating so-called guru and his cheated votaries will enter hell.[13]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī delineated that a true guru is from beyond this world:

Only those who have descended from the spiritual stratum can speak about it; no one from this world can speak about the spiritual plane. When the living entities are fortunate enough to hear about that realm from persons who have come from there, they gain the opportunity to know about Vaikuṇṭha. We cannot understand transcendental topics by mundane consideration. It is not proper to compromise between the transcendental and the

phenomenal. If we are fortunate we will meet a Vaikuṇṭha man. Therefore Śrī Caitanya-deva states in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta:*

kṛṣṇa yadi kṛpā kare kona bhāgyavāne
guru-antaryāmi-rūpe śikhāya āpane

When kind to some fortunate conditioned soul, Kṛṣṇa—as the Supersoul within and the spiritual master without—personally instructs him. (Cc 2.22.47)[14] *

And he further described the characteristics of a true guru:

A sadhu is one who will relieve me from all puzzling doubt. I do not want any incorrect worldly knowledge. A sadhu will give me the highest good. I should make friends with such a Vaiṣṇava who genuinely desires my topmost welfare. To attain the maximum benefit of *sādhu-saṅga,* we should be ever ready to give up all mundane connections. If perchance we meet a sadhu or true devotee, then we shall be rescued and relieved, and shown the right path for reaching our goal. He will always supply and enrich us with transcendental knowledge and service. A true devotee has no words to speak or utter except for serving the Supreme Lord.[15]

Hereditary Guruship

As evidence for their claim to being divinely ordained to initiate in the Gauḍīya *sampradāya,* and that persons not born in *brāhmaṇa* families are disqualified, caste Goswamis cited *anvayaḥ śuddhaḥ* (pure family) from the qualifications listed in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* (1.38) for a guru. Apparently Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had echoed this position in both *Harināma-cintāmaṇi* (chap. 6) and *Jaiva Dharma* (chap. 20), yet in both he had also clarified that, regardless of caste, any properly qualified devotee of Kṛṣṇa is a bona fide guru.

This was in accord with Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's definitive judgment *kibā vipra kibā nyāsī śūdra kene naya, yei kṛṣṇa tattva vettā sei guru haya:* "Whether one is a *brāhmaṇa,* sannyasi, or *śūdra*—regardless of what he is—he can become a guru if he knows the science of Kṛṣṇa." (Cc 2.8.128) In his commentary on this verse, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura clarified:

Hari-bhakti-vilāsa states that if a fit person in the brahminical order is present, one should not accept initiation from a person of lower social class. This instruction is suitable and meant for those who are overly dependent on mundane social considerations and want to remain in material life. If one understands the truth of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and seriously desires to attain transcendental knowledge for the perfection of life, he can accept a spiritual master from any social status, provided the spiritual master is fully conversant with the science of Kṛṣṇa.

In that commentary, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had given many other apt references from *Padma Purāṇa* that were included in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa:*

na śūdrā bhagavad-bhaktās te tu bhāgavatā matāḥ
sarva-varṇeṣu te śūdrā ye na bhaktā janārdane

A devotee is never a *śūdra.* Devotees of the Supreme Personality of Godhead should be recognized as *bhāgavatas.* But one who is not a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa, even if of a *brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya* or *vaiśya* family, is a *śūdra.*

ṣaṭ-karma-nipuṇo vipro mantra-tantra-viśāradaḥ
avaiṣṇavo gurur na syād vaiṣṇavaḥ śva-paco guruḥ

A scholarly *brāhmaṇa,* expert in all subjects of Vedic knowledge, is unfit to become a spiritual master if he is not a Vaiṣṇava. But even if born in a family of dog-eaters, a Vaiṣṇava can become a guru.

mahā-kula-prasūto 'pi sarva-yajñeṣu dīkṣitaḥ
sahasra-śākhādhyāyī ca na guruḥ syād avaiṣṇavaḥ

Even if he has taken birth in an exalted dynasty, performed all sacrifices, and studied many branches of the Vedas, a non-Vaiṣṇava is never fit to be guru.

vipra-kṣatriya-vaiśyāś ca guravaḥ śūdra-janmanām
śūdrāś ca guravas teṣāṁ trayāṇāṁ bhagavat-priyāḥ

A *brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya,* or *vaiśya* can be guru for the *śūdra* class, but a Vaiṣṇava, even if born a *śūdra,* because he is dear to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, can be the guru of these higher orders.

In his extended additional commentary to the *kibā vipra* verse, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī quoted *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.11.35:

yasya yal-lakṣaṇaṁ proktaṁ puṁso varṇābhivyañjakam
yad anyatrāpi dṛśyeta tat tenaiva vinirdiśet

Even if he has appeared in a different class, one possessing the symptoms of a *brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya,* or *śūdra* should be accepted according to those symptoms of classification.

Fish-eating and Intoxication

The extent to which deviation within Vaiṣṇava dharma had become rationalized was epitomized by persons who wore Vaiṣṇava *tilaka* and neckbeads, chanted on *japa-mālā,* enthusiastically partook in *kīrtana* and other devotional practices, yet also delighted in eating fish. In other parts of India, it was unthinkable for Vaiṣṇavas to eat fish and meat; only in the Bengal-Orissa cultural bloc did persons who identified themselves as Vaiṣṇavas do so. This was probably due to the strong influence in that area of *śāktas,* among whom carnivorousness was doctrinally acceptable under certain conditions (that were commonly largely dispensed with); moreover, fish was plentiful and affordable. Although Lord Caitanya and His associates had never eaten fish, most modern Bengali Vaiṣṇavas did so without considering that it might be sinful. Few saw any incongruity in, for instance, returning from the bazar with a *japa-mālā* in one hand and a freshly purchased fish dangling in the other. Members of the *kālacāṅdi apa-sampradāya* even offered fish along with *tulasi* leaves to Kṛṣṇa and then took it as "*prasāda.*" Supposed Vaiṣṇavas would extenuate Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's protests by saying, "Will the all-merciful Bhagavān cease being kind to us for a little thing like fish-eating?" They further downplayed their cruelty by heartlessly arguing that fish is vegetarian, being "*gaṅgā-phala*" (fruit of the Gaṅgā).

In Dacca, one Prāṇa Gopāla Brahmacārī challenged Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura by declaring it acceptable for Vaiṣṇavas to take non-vegetarian food, citing Garuḍa and Jaṭāyu (famous devotees in an eagle and vulture form respectively) as non-vegetarian. But Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura rebutted, "There are innumerable Vaiṣṇavas who abjure meat and fish; a few exceptions do not neutralize the rule. Flesh is the ordained food for those particular bodily forms. It is not approved for all."[16]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī shed light on the Purāṇic statement that eating fish in Purī is equivalent to taking *haviṣyānna,* the purest sacrificial food:[*]

> *Smṛti* states, *matsyādaḥ sarva-māṁsādas tasmān matsyān vivarjayet:* "Eating fish is equivalent to eating all other kinds of meat and thus should be forsworn."[17] According to this scriptural statement, one who eats fish incurs the sin of eating the flesh of all types of living entities. Therefore since fish is most impure, it can never be considered fit for eating.
>
> *Haviṣya* is most pure, a food that is not in any manner reprehensible. Yet residence in Purī, even for one who eats totally impure food, automatically gives rise to strong awareness of Mukunda. Then, because the sinful desire to eat abominable foods like fish will not endure, he will come to realize that Viṣṇu *prasāda* is more palatable and pure even than *haviṣya.* Unable to understand the import of this Purāṇic statement, the wrongly principled residents of this land of God unrestrictedly indulge in food like dried fish. If they would take *sannyāsa* instead of fish, their mouths could resound with *harināma.* Even though *haviṣya* is sattvic, it is not equal to *nirguṇa* (transcendental) *mahā-prasāda,* which gives rise to spotless Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti.*[18]

Intoxicants were wholly eschewed by pure Vaiṣṇavas, but mild forms were commonly used by nominal Vaiṣṇavas in Bengal, to basically the same extent as by other sections of society. Indulgence in alcohol, even though doctrinally acceptable under certain conditions for *śāktas,* remained largely taboo in almost all sections of society. Ganja was a standard "meditational aid" for Śaiva and Rāmānandī sadhus of the Hindi-speaking area, who also believed that it helped subdue sexual desire. But among Bengalis, of whom few were Śaivas and probably none Rāmānandīs, use of ganja, bhang, opium, and similar drugs was not very common and was largely frowned on. Tobacco—either chewed, or smoked as bidis or via hookahs or crude pipes—was in wide use, mostly among lower-class men. Chewing of pan was almost universal among both men and women of all social classes except the very poor. Tea-drinking, although widely shunned as sinful when first introduced by British merchants, had become an unquestioned feature of everyday Indian life. The change came after the merchants' vigorous propagation of the (largely spurious) health benefits of tea. Coffee-drinking had not caught on among Bengalis.

Thirteen Prominent Apa-sampradāyas

Prākṛta-sahajiyās

> The disease of *prākṛta-sahajiyā*-ism is very widespread. In a form that devours everything, takes various shapes, and steals the mind, it wanders throughout the universe, increasing the covering of those *jīvas* captured by a seemingly natural tendency to reject Kṛṣṇa, and by severe offenses to Vaiṣṇavas, it causes further degradation of the bound *jīvas* and uprooting of their devotional creeper.[19]

Prākṛta-sahajiyās were conspicuous among the groups of deviant Vaiṣṇavas. *Prākṛta* means "material" and *sahajiyā* means "follower of the easy or instinctive way." Thus *prākṛta-sahajiyā* means both one who takes everything easily, by ignoring the scripturally prescribed regulations o f *sādhana-bhakti,* and one who follows his instinct for unrestricted sexual indulgence. Considering freedom from material desires to be too demanding a prerequisite for spiritual perfection, *prākṛta-sahajiyās* conveniently dispensed with it. Apparently *sahajiyā*-ism had its roots in a tantric Buddhist sect of the same name and had developed an elaborate esoteric methodology based on hypothetically spiritual sexuality. By the time of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, little of the previous mystical pretext remained extant, yet the prurience continued to markedly influence much of conventional Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma.

The term *prākṛta-sahajiyā* was coined by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī in consonance with his penchant for exact definition. When an intellectual once commented that although the term *sahajiyā* was well-known, he had not previously heard of *prākṛta-sahajiyās,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī explained that pure devotees are genuine *sahajiyās,* for *sahaja* denotes the innate and natural, and *aprākṛta-sahajiyās* are synchronized with the instinctive nature of the soul to love Kṛṣṇa; hence the prefix *prākṛta* is required to indicate those *sahajiyās* whose uncontrolled and impure proclivities declared their lower bestial nature.[*] He noted two main characteristics of the *prākṛta-sahajiyās:* they presume that when Bhagavān comes to this world He becomes a material object, and they deem themselves pure devotees equal in all respects to actual pure devotees.[20]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī broadly used the term *prākṛta-sahajiyā* to denote the whole mīlange of deviant Bengali Vaiṣṇava sects, not only the relatively few who specifically identified themselves as *sahajiyās,* but also the many who being sentimentally disposed toward Kṛṣṇa considered themselves Vaiṣṇavas and not *sahajiyās.* The great majority were not profligate or pretentious sadhus, but ordinary householders typically initiated in *jāta-gosāñi* lines who, although possessed of such common bad habits as fish-eating and chewing tobacco, adjudged themselves respectable members of the Vaiṣṇava community. Yet all shared the basic *sahajiyā* error of practicing supposed *bhakti* for their own rather than Kṛṣṇa's gratification, or of making no distinction between personal sense indulgence and Hari-*sevā,* thus engendering a culture of hypocrisy wherein ulteriorly motivated acts were presented as *bhakti.*

Even though the ultimate aim of Gauḍīya *sādhana* is to transcend, and apparently even transgress, worldly dharma, confusion was endemic in the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* about the respective roles of worldly and transcendental dharma in the lives of *sādhakas,* and regarding behavior and practice appropriate to level of advancement. Due to not understanding the inadvisability, particularly in the inconsummate stage, of forswearing at least external practice of ordinary dharma, chaos had ensued both in observance of worldly dharma and in advancement toward transcendental dharma, with *prākṛta-sahajiyās* neglecting to follow normative regulations of *sādhana-bhakti* that proscribe sinful life. But paradoxically, due to *smārta* influence many were punctilious in observing minor rules. Saying that the main thing is to love Kṛṣṇa, they treated the scripturally defined tenets and practices of *vaidhī bhakti* with levity, thus weltering in a jumble of imagined high realizations yet low behavior—an unsavory mix of devotion and degradation—maintaining a veneer of religionism while flouting basic religious principles. Notwithstanding the incompatibility of Hari-*bhakti* and sin, they attempted to engineer an interface of the two by representing sense gratification as Vaiṣṇava dharma.

Prākṛta-sahajiyās measured *bhakti* by external symptoms—sweetness of voice, ability to recite scripture in entertaining style, emotive mannerisms, and tawdry displays of rapture. These pseudo-devotees were practiced at imitating the ecstatic symptoms of exalted Vaiṣṇavas, such as trembling, weeping, faltering speech, and fainting. But since the imitators believed that any source of pleasure is desirable and could be classified as spiritual, many were addicted to intoxicants, flesh-eating, and illicit sex. Some even shamelessly justified their hedonism by maintaining that because Kṛṣṇa loves His devotees, He is pleased to see them delighting in material comforts and sensual rhapsody.

According to certain *prākṛta-sahajiyās,* Caitanya Mahāprabhu had intimately associated with Ṣāṭhī, the daughter of Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, and even Śrī Rūpa and Śrī Sanātana had indulged in erotic affairs. *Prākṛta-sahajiyās* concocted such "evidence" to justify their own lives of pietistic debauchery in the garb of devotees. According to them, that several worthies in the Gauḍīya tradition such as Caṇḍīdāsa, Jayadeva, Vidyāpati, and even Lord Nityānanda had married, demonstrated that Vaiṣṇavas are permitted to enjoy sexual union. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī rejected this claim as impossible, for although some respected Vaiṣṇavas of yore had been householders, being pure devotees they did not relate with their wife in a mundane lusty manner. He described Śrīla Jayadeva Gosvāmī's relationship with his spouse Padmāvatī:

> Śrīla Jayadeva Gosvāmī Prabhu has given his identification as *padmāvatī caraṇa-cāraṇa cakravartī:* "at the feet of Padmāvatī, the emperor of minstrels" or "the best of the servants of Padmāvatī's lotus feet."[21] Jayadeva Gosvāmī served Padmāvatī in the same way that Śrīla Rāmānanda Rāya served certain dancing girls.[*] Lackluster people consider Padmāvatī as Jayadeva's wife, but Jayadeva never saw her in that way. Padmāvatī was a devotee. Unlike the *prākṛta-sahajiyās,* Jayadeva never regarded his wife as an object of marital enjoyment.[22]

It was not uncommon for spurious *bābājīs* to outwardly playact as if renounced while maintaining utterly degraded private lives. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura declared such secret sinfulness as more despicable and punishable than that done openly. He compared it to breaking *nirjala-vrata* by gulping water while submerged in a river during bathing, and cited *Prema-vivarta*:[23]

> *loka-dekhāna gorā bhajā tilaka-mātra dhari*
> *gopanete atyācāra gorā dhare curi*
>
> One whose show of worshiping Gaura consists merely of wearing *tilaka* is caught by Gaura in the act of stealing, as he secretly acts immorally.

Hence, either covertly or brazenly, illicit sex was prevalent among the hardcore *prākṛta-sahajiyā* sects. The *Harmonist* observed:

> In all of these cults [*prākṛta-sahajiyā, bāula, kālacāṅdi,* and *kiśorī-bhajā*] the root of error assumes the form of the absurd and profane blunder that the transcendental activities of the Godhead as found in the scriptures are identical with vilest sexual orgies of the worst human debauchees. Those who are excessively addicted to sexual enjoyment are sometimes so much deluded thereby as to suppose that all men are equally vile. Some of the very worst among them are so entirely lost to all sense of shame that they felt no hesitation in proclaiming to those who, failing to see through their artifices, are willing to listen to them, that there is nothing holier or happier than sexual immorality, pretending to have discovered the abominable doctrine in the scriptural accounts of the transcendental activities of Godhead.[24]

By such impropriety *prākṛta-sahajiyās* scorned Caitanya Mahāprabhu's ideal of *vairāgya-vidyā* (renunciation and knowledge).[*] Presuming to very easily attain the topmost achievement of the whole theological process, they recklessly indulged in discussing, singing of, and contemplating the intimate esoteric pastimes of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Consequently they lived in a fools' paradise of speculative histrionics, desiring without paying the price to immediately enjoy a result attainable only after intensive practice and purification. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī considered *prākṛta-sahajiyās, jāta-gosāñis,* and others of their ilk to be worse than outright sinners of no professed religious disposition, and that even Hades had no place for them.[25] Citing Mahāprabhu's "death sentence" for Choṭa Haridāsa, he advocated that persons who are lecherous in the name of Lord Caitanya be meted out punishment more severe than any prescribed in the Indian Penal Code.[26 †]

Ignorant of the legitimate process of Hari-*bhakti, prākṛta-sahajiyās* resembled Māyāvādīs insofar as both indiscriminately merged material with spiritual. On the basis that Vaiṣṇavas should not be regarded as greater or lesser according to their caste, *prākṛta-sahajiyās* extrapolated that not even spiritually based distinctions should be made between them. Citing the inapt metaphor of a small *tulasī* leaf being as divine as a big one, they ignored and obfuscated scriptural gradation of devotees, claiming all as *uttama,* and deemed it offensive to

differentiate between even genuinely elevated devotees and gross sensualists in Vaiṣṇava attire. Yet Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī warned that to regard a *sādhaka* as a *siddha* would cause destruction of *bhakti.*[27]

Prākṛta-sahajiyās were similarly unable or unwilling to discriminate between material and transcendental enjoyment, worldly and spiritual fame, false and factual renunciation, affected and authentic devotion, worldly and devotional service, lust and love, bluffers and bona fide gurus, the scripturally authorized acts and the unauthorized, or proper conclusions and travesties of scriptural understanding.

To illustrate the artificial *prema* that was representative of *prākṛta-sahajiyās,* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would cite an incident that he called "four-anna *bhāva,*" as was related to him in 1919 when he visited Kushtia:

A Hari-*sabhā* (regular gathering for Hari-*kathā* and *kīrtana*) had split into two discordant groups. A *kīrtanīyā* who had been hired by one of the factions for a festival caused a sensation by feigning an ecstatic swoon and holding it for nearly an hour, thus earning from the approving onlookers the plaudit of being a *parama bhakta.* Not to be outdone, the organizers of the rival party pledged to bring a performer capable of exhibiting even greater *bhāva.* Finding another entrepreneur *kīrtanīyā,* they struck a deal that if he could outstrip the former entertainer he would earn four annas worth of ganja and possibly additional perks. Starting off with some lively whooping and jigging, this showman soon fell to the ground, rolled in the dust for some time, and then became limp in mock trance. Yet unable to bear for long the summer heat, after half an hour he arose and requested payment. When the leader of the Hari-*sabhā* protested that the contract had not been fulfilled, the charlatan snapped back, "How much *bhāva* do you expect for four annas?"[28]

In this regard Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī further commented:

> Persons who are actually very poor, possessing nary a drop of *prema,* being overcome by crookedness and failing to attain *prema,* nonetheless announce themselves to the world as exalted devotees. Yet for all such advertising, such *prema*-bereft persons lack even the possibility of attaining *prema.* To exhibit their supposed good fortune, *prākṛta-sahajiyās* sometimes display devotional symptoms, but they are simply pretending, for those features are merely external. *Prākṛta-sahajiyās* make these displays to flaunt their so-called advancement in love of Kṛṣṇa, yet far from acknowledging *prākṛta-sahajiyās* as actual lovers of Kṛṣṇa, pure devotees reject their association as being destructive to cultivation of *bhakti. Prākṛta-sahajiyās* should not be equated with pure devotees. One in whom actual *prema* has manifest tries to hide his glories and continue with *bhajana.*
>
> Hypocritical *prākṛta-sahajiyās,* covetous of money, women, and reputation, criticize pure devotees by calling them philosophers, learned scholars, knowers of the truth, or minute observers, but not devotees. On the other hand, they depict themselves as *rasika* (most advanced transcendentally blissful devotees), *bhajanānandī* (those who delight in

bhajana), *bhāgavatottama* (highest devotees in spontaneous love), *līlā-rasapānonmatta* (mad to taste the *rasa* of transcendental pastimes), *rāgānugīya-sādhakāgragaṇya* (best practioners on the *rāga* path), *rasajña* (knowers of transcendental *rasa*), *rasika-cūḍamaṇi* (topmost devotees relishing *rasa*), and so on. Not actually knowing the transcendental nature of love of Godhead, they esteem themselves as great devotees while thinking their material emotions indicative of advancement. Unaware of actual transcendental *rasa,* those among them who attempt to write Vaiṣṇava literature simply promote mundane conceptions of *rasa* and thereby pollute the process of devotional service.[29]

Smārtas

Quite unlike *prākṛta-sahajiyās,* yet at least as influential upon Vaiṣṇava society in Bengal, were *smārtas,* the body of orthodox caste Hindus who largely adhered to *smārta-vidhi.* They generally identified themselves simply as Hindus rather than *smārtas*—a term that many were not even familiar with. Formalist and conservative, they rigidly upheld prescriptive Hindu values, particularly caste consuetudes and complex rules prescribing ritual purity. Priding themselves on their uprightness and solid moral fiber, *smārtas,* particularly those of *brāhmaṇa* caste, tended to disassociate themselves from Vaiṣṇava dharma and abhorred the depravity endemic within it. Sententiously, yet not wholly unreasonably, they viewed Vaiṣṇavas as pests who, having been expelled from respectable society, were now further disrupting the social order by claiming that as followers of Lord Caitanya they were classless and absolved of moral accountability. To the horror of caste-ridden *smārtas,* Vaiṣṇavas purposely ignored artificial mores such as those regulating intercaste dining, which governed whom one could sit to dine with, or invite or accept invitations from. On philosophical grounds also, *smārtas* typically opposed Vaiṣṇava dharma as being nonconformist, adjudging it and Vaiṣṇava *śāstras* such as *Pañcarātra* to be non-Vedic. A common saying synopsized *smārta* contempt toward Vaiṣṇavas:

> *veda-vidhi chāḍā, yāya boṣṭam pāḍā*
>
> Devoid of Veda and *vidhi,* they enter the Vaiṣṇava quarters.

Most *smārtas* maintained that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was not Bhagavān, but at best some kind of saint. Many concurred with worldly academicians that the present degradation in Bengal was due in no small measure to Śrī Caitanya, whom they contemned as a social deviant. In the name of *prema-dharma* He had deserted home, leaving behind His weeping family and friends to become a wretched beggar, thus misguiding others to renounce both *prema* and *dharma. Smārtas* further loathed Lord Caitanya's free mixing with lower castes and His respecting "low-class" Vaiṣṇavas even more than born-*brāhmaṇa* nondevotees, which they deemed had instigated an artificial attempt by Vaiṣṇavas at achieving higher social status. Furthermore, they spurned the Vaiṣṇava claim that *harināma* alone is sufficient to destroy all sins, as this thesis severely undermined the nostrum that elaborate procedures are required for absolution. And since *smārta* priests relied on contributions in exchange for prescribing and

administering such procedures, their interest lay not in directing people to stop sinning, but in obliquely encouraging them to continue—particularly because a prime method of atonement was to give charity to *brāhmaṇas,* namely themselves. They interpreted *śāstrīya* statements upholding the Vaiṣṇava position as nonfactual inducements to encourage chanting the names of Viṣṇu, which they considered pious activity but certainly not all-absolving. Overall, *smārtas* viewed Vaiṣṇavas as flippant sentimentalists craftily framing pretexts to circumvent ancient traditions.

Confined within *karma-kāṇḍa* and *jñāna-kāṇḍa, smārtas* were influenced primarily by two doctrines: *karma-mīmāṁsā,* a wholly materialistic dogma propounded by the ancient sage Jaimini, which recommends performance of pious activities in order to reap future good results, and the Māyāvāda of Śaṅkarācārya, who although philosophically largely at odds with Jaimini, had likewise advocated that the common man discharge scripturally ordained duties.

Drawing an analogy from Kṛṣṇa-*līlā,* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura explained the relationship between *smārta-vāda,* impersonalism, and Kṛṣṇa:

> When Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma entered Mathurā to kill Kaṁsa, they saw on the wayside a washerman whose job was to scrub soiled clothes and dye cloth in diverse colors. This washerman represents *smārta-vāda.* The master of *smārta-vāda* is impersonal philosophy, symbolized by Kaṁsa. *Smārta-vāda* washes away the infection of bad material conduct and sinful actions with the water of *prāyaścitta* (ritual atonement), colors those actions with various descriptions of wonderful results, and finally offers all this to their master—impersonalism in the form of Kaṁsa—who rejects the eternal nature of Kṛṣṇa's name, form, qualities, and activities. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are the constituent ingredients of all that be and the masters even of Kaṁsa, whereas the impersonal conception is merely an imperfect manifestation of Kṛṣṇa. When failing to understand this, the washerman, a servant of impersonalism, showed aversion to Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa killed him. The chains of moral conduct apply to those who are dependent. The absolutely independent Supreme Person is not bound by the artificial chains of conduct of a servant of His servant [Māyā]. By His own wish He is bound by Yaśodā and the *gopīs'* ropes of love.[30 *]

According to *smārtas,* only males born in the upper three castes could be invested with the *upavīta,* upon receiving which they could study the Vedas and recite Brahma-*gāyatrī.* Commensurate with their eligibility according to birthcaste, non-*brāhmaṇas* should perform *puṇya-karma* (pious activities) to eventually earn a future birth as a *brāhmaṇa,* this being the only status wherefrom they could aspire for the highest attainment of impersonal liberation. *Smārtas* further asseverated that even if persons who undertake Hari-*bhakti* are accepted as purified, still they would have to reincarnate in a family of *brāhmaṇas* to gain the prerogative to execute Vedic ceremonies essential to Hindu life. As heirs to a skein of complex and varied systems of philosophy and procedures, *smārtas* were proud of their unbending adherence to innumerable rote formulas. Yet misconstruing the purpose of Vedic rules and having little knowledge of their underlying abstrusities, *smārtas,* swathed by uncountable jejune ritualistic

ceremonies and punctilios, maintained a wholly materialistic view of Vedic dharma and life itself.

Although many practices of *smārtas* and pure Vaiṣṇavas were apparently similar, their conceptual differences were so profound as to render them mutually antithetical. Pure Vaiṣṇavas were enjoined to execute *varṇāśrama* duties according to devotionally oriented *smṛti-śāstras,* particularly *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa,* for cultivating the consciousness of being not the body but a pure soul and servant of Viṣṇu, and with the conviction that all activities should be discharged for His satisfaction. Yet materialistic *smārtas* followed *varṇāśrama-dharma* to reinforce bodily consciousness and fulfil selfish desires. Although many of their practices, such as Ekādaśī fasting, chanting names of Viṣṇu, and bathing in holy rivers, paralleled those of devotees, *smārtas* regarded these as *puṇya-karma* efficacious in countervailing bad karma and awarding good. *Smārtas* observed Ekādaśī fast on days forbidden in Vaiṣṇava lore, insisted that *śrāddha* for delivering departed forefathers from ghostly existence was necessary even for Vaiṣṇavas, dealt condescendingly with Vaiṣṇavas of lower-caste birth, and deemed initiated Vaiṣṇavas of low birth unauthorized to worship *śālagrāma.* They rejected even Viṣṇu *prasāda* as impure if served by a non-*brāhmaṇa.* And considering *mṛdaṅgas*—integral paraphernalia of Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana*— contaminated and untouchable due to being made of leather, *smārtas* protested their being brought inside temples. Notwithstanding *smārtas'* official worship of Lord Viṣṇu, they took Him as one among miscellaneous gods subject to the law of karma and reincarnation and, like an ordinary being, subject to *śāstrīya* regulations. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī explained that *smārtas'* formal offerings to Viṣṇu were not synonymous with Vaiṣṇava worship, but in fact just the opposite:

> The *smārtas'* worship of Viṣṇu is part of their worship of demigods such as Gaṇeśa, Sūrya, and so on, and does not qualify as worship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Worshiping Viṣṇu as if He were one of the five demigods means to view Him as a demigod, failing to recognize His superlative position. Such worship is both offensive and atheistic.[31]

Smārtas followed the *pañcopāsanā* system imputed to Śaṅkarācārya that entailed worshiping five deities: Sūrya (the sun) for dharma, Gaṇeśa for *artha* (prosperity), Durgā for *kāma* (sensory gratification), Śiva for eventual *mokṣa* (emancipation from material existence), and Viṣṇu—His presence being compulsory in all worship—to gain boons such as freedom from fear and sorrow.[*] Or, with the impersonalist misapprehension that all gods are equal, they worshiped any demigods who fit their inclination. Influenced by the prominent *śākta* cult in Bengal, *smārtas* there generally preferred to worship Durgā for gaining worldly opulence.

Despite their pride in being highly cultured due to pedigree, tradition, learning, religious observances, congenitally superior intelligence, and adherence to rules of ritual purity, the artificial discrimination that *smārta-brāhmaṇas* foisted on society indicated that their mentality was inherently base and exploitive. Even though assiduously conducting religious rites, *smārtas'* bodily identification and worldly aspirations rendered their outlook and activities

wholly materialistic. In his article "Prākṛta Śūdra Vaiṣṇava Nahe," Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura established that Vaiṣṇava dharma confers transcendental (*aprākṛta*) brahminical qualities upon even a person born of the *śūdra* caste, whereas so-called *smārta-brahmaṇas* are not eligible to be Vaiṣṇavas because they culture the attributes of worldly (*prākṛta*) *śūdras.* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura further disdained the *smārtas* superficial and faithless approach:

> Because *smārtas* emphasize external, material purity, their worship is idolatrous and atheistic. Although concerned with purity and impurity, they act contrary to the wishes of the Lord and the spirit of *śāstra.* They think that even *mahā-prasāda,* Gaṅgā water, *caraṇāmṛta, śālagrāma,* and *śāstra* become contaminated by contacting impure items, that if the Lord appears in the material universe He becomes defiled by matter, and that if a Vaiṣṇava delivers a fallen soul from the ephemeral world he becomes contaminated in the process. If, as they maintain, *mahā-prasāda* loses its spiritual quality upon touching the hand of a *caṇḍāla,* and the *Bhāgavata* if covered by leather becomes contaminated, then what is the purifying quality of these items? How can one person uplift another? How can a sinful untouchable be redeemed?[32] [*]

Hinduism in Bengal was governed by the huge body of *smṛti* rules that *smārta* Raghunandana Bhaṭṭācārya of Navadvīpa had codified after Caitanya Mahāprabhu's disappearance and which had become the inviolable authority for regulating every minute detail of Hindu life.[†] According to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, Raghunandana had compiled his *smṛtis* out of sheer malice toward Viṣṇu and Vaiṣṇava dharma with the intention of nullifying the influence of *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa,* published some fifty years earlier. Although Raghunandana's ordinances were collected from various *śāstras,* they were wholly devoid of any discussion of the ultimately transcendental purpose of Vedic rites, and gave directions only on how to achieve satisfaction of the gross and subtle bodies in present and future lives. Typical of *karma-kāṇḍa,* they constituted an elaborate system for self-deception under a shroud of piety. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī commented that Raghunandana's prayers to Kṛṣṇa in his *smṛtis* were simply pretences, for they were accompanied by elaborate descriptions of procedures inimical to Hari-*bhakti,* and thus his show of reverence for Kṛṣṇa was similar to that of *asuras* like Jarāsandha.

Raghunandana solidly upheld *brāhmaṇa* dominance, so by incorporating his usages into Gauḍīya practice, descendants of *brāhmaṇa* followers of Mahāprabhu assured their own families' paramount position in Vaiṣṇava society for generations to come. Hence caste rigidity became as fixed among Gauḍīyas as in broader Hindu culture, thereby contravening Lord Caitanya's teachings meant to establish devotees as transcendental to social status. The *Harmonist* noted, "The hereditary organization necessitated the multiplication of rules and regulations to perpetuate the usurpation of spiritual authority by the pseudo-*brāhmaṇas* who claimed their status by right of heredity."[33]

While in conventional Bengali Vaiṣṇavism the caste Goswamis functioned as gurus, priestly duties remained the domain of *smārta-brāhmaṇas,* who performed ceremonies according to

smārta lore for all caste Hindus, even those theoretically Vaiṣṇava. Thus *smārta* policies and rituals formed the basis of social and domestic affairs for all caste Hindus, including Vaiṣṇavas, whose outlook was theoretically incompatible with *smārta* practice. From birth till death, every important event in life had its appropriate observance, the prescribed procedures for which supposedly only *brāhmaṇas* were qualified to interpret from the religious lawbooks and administer. Neglect or defiance of this regimen would precipitate severe social ostracism and the dread of abject misery in the hereafter. The religious ascendancy of born *brāhmaṇas* and their sacrosanct sacerdotal role thereby becoming firmly entrenched, the domination of the *brāhmaṇa* caste was complete and inescapable.

There being no clear conception of *śuddha-bhakti* extant in society, the all-accommodating syncretism of Hinduism had blurred differences between *smārtas* and Vaiṣṇavas. As a result, the distinctive character of Vaiṣṇava dharma in Bengal was largely compromised by being co-opted into *smārta*-dominated mainstream Hinduism. Multiple aspects of traditional Vaiṣṇava life had become forgotten, and even in ostensibly Vaiṣṇava families, due to social pressure or mere ignorance, *śrāddha* and other rites were conducted according to *smārta-vidhi.* Most persons identifying themselves as Vaiṣṇavas were disciples of caste Goswamis and practiced the distinctive activities of Gauḍīya dharma, such as performing *kīrtana* and wearing Vaiṣṇava *tilaka,* yet also adhered to *smārta* rituals and customs meant for accruing temporal piety. Similarly widespread was worship of demigods in tandem with that of Kṛṣṇa. But these non-Vaiṣṇava practices ipso facto disqualified the performers from *śuddha-bhakti,* so despite their apparent fervor, their imagined *bhakti* remained stuck on the material platform.

And incongruously, many *smārtas* became initiated into Vaiṣṇava mantras, observed numerous Vaiṣṇava practices, and regarded themselves Vaiṣṇavas of sorts. Yet they were not accepted as such by pure Vaiṣṇavas unless they wholly forswore their *smārta* dedication to the ritualism that was thickly overlaid by desire for gain through fruitive activities and impersonalistic philosophical speculation, in contravention of the essence of Vedic dharma as defined by Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī: unmotivated devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa.[*] Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī noted that the so-called *bhakti* of North Indian *smārtas* was much contaminated by *karma,* and that of South Indian *smārtas* by *jñāna.*[34]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura recognized that the *karma-kāṇḍa* of *smārtas* serves a purpose for persons on that miserably low level, yet he pointed out that *karma-kāṇḍa* nonetheless obfuscates the real purpose of the Vedas and of human life. Hence *karma-kāṇḍīya* rituals and understanding should not be adopted by those fortunate enough to have come to the truly elevated and only auspicious path for the *jīva: śuddha-bhakti.*

A principal avenue of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's didactic efforts was to create awareness of the defects of *smārta* observances in popular Vaiṣṇava dharma and rectify them by reviving practices based on genuine Vaiṣṇava-*smṛti,* particularly *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* and *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā,* about which he commented:

> *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā,* written by Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī in accordance with the

> Vedic process, existed in Gauḍīya society a hundred years prior to the period of *smārta* Raghunandana. But due to a lack of *ācāryas,* hitherto this book was locked in a box and thus unknown among Vaiṣṇavas. The society of pure Gauḍīyas will take a thousand years to repay their debt to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura for his fulfilling the need of pure devotees by propagating this book among Vaiṣṇavas, in accordance with the will of Śrī Gaurasundara. And if Śrī Gaurasundara desires, then to protect their purity Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas may unanimously adopt the principles of this Vaiṣṇava-*smṛti.*[35]

Jāta-gosāñis

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu had repudiated cultural norms by unequivocally rejecting caste and heredity as determinants for guruship:

> *kibā vipra, kibā nyāsī, śūdra kene naya*
> *yei kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā, sei 'guru' haya*
>
> Whether a *brāhmaṇa, sannyāsī,* or *śūdra,* anyone well versed in the science of Kṛṣṇa is fit to be a guru. (Cc 2.8.128)

Yet the *smārta* concept of eligibility by birth was apparently so deeply embedded in the Hindu psyche and social order wherein the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* had taken root, that soon after Mahāprabhu's disappearance Gauḍīyas also developed hereditary guru lineages descended from principal associates of the Lord or from their prominent disciples. Some of these lineages were reportedly deliberately instituted by early leaders of the *sampradāya.* However it might have originated, it seems that patrilineal guruship within Gauḍīya society evolved naturally, and initially without malintent; but it was soon afflicted by the improprieties endemic in Kali-yuga to such a system. Two discipular generations after Mahāprabhu, the empowered Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura and Śrīla Śyāmānanda Prabhu, although themselves superficially of lower birth, again defied caste mores by initiating persons born in *brāhmaṇa* families. Yet ironically, in so doing they originated new hereditary lineages.

With apparent support from *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa,* these hereditary lineages had become unquestionably recognized by all orthodox Gauḍīyas. Like *smārtas, jāta-gosāñis* and their followers maintained that since everyone is born according to his previous activities, spiritual qualification is also determined by birth, and since birth in an elevated family is the consequence of one's past pious deeds, only males begotten of *brāhmaṇas* are qualified to study and explain scripture, especially *śruti,* and be gurus of others. *Jāta-gosāñis* considered that by ancestral right their very existence was divine, and that regardless of their behavior they must be honored as gurus. Even though sunk in mundane familial affairs, they confabulated themselves to be as important as the original, renounced *gosvāmīs* of the Gauḍīya *sampradāya.*

Every caste Goswami belonged to a specific *vaṁśa* (genealogical line) named after the associate of Lord Caitanya claimed to be his progenitor. Each *vaṁśa* was also connected to particular *parivāra* (literally "family"). *Parivāras* were passed down by *śiṣya-paramparā*

(discipular succession), and *vaṁśas* by *bindu-paramparā* (seminal succession). For example, a person born in the family line of Advaita Prabhu came within the Advaita-*vaṁśa,* and anyone initiated by an Advaita-*vaṁśa* guru automatically became a member of the Advaita-*parivāra.* In addition, there were *parivāras* not connected to any *vaṁśa*—for instance, the *parivāra* stemming from the lifelong celibate Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita.

The largest and most widespread *parivāra* was the Nityānanda-*parivāra,* due partially to the prestige attached to the name of Lord Nityānanda but mainly to its liberality in accepting disciples—unlike the Advaita-*parivāra,* the Goswamis of which initiated only upper-caste Hindus, and for so doing regarded themselves more dignified and aristocratic. There were also *parivāras* claiming to represent the *ācāryas* Narottama, Gadādhara, Vakreśvara, Śyāmānanda, and others. Most Goswamis thereof were *brāhmaṇa* by caste.

Being the elite of these *parivāras,* persons born in caste Goswami families, irrespective of their actual devotional standing, were blindly lionized, at least by vacuous people with no serious spiritual aspirations, as *mahā-bhāgavatas.* Having assumed the role of spiritual mentors, caste Goswamis were responsible to teach all scriptural conclusions to their disciples. Yet to maintain their standing as professional gurus they preferred to keep their clientele in ignorance and fear, and to uphold or at least aquiesce to prevalent malpractices, all the while warning their gullible flunkeys about the dire consequences of rejecting one's guru. Out of insouciance, or fear of losing their disciples' allegiance, even those few Goswamis who themselves assiduously observed devotional practices rarely required their disciples to do so.

By thus commandeering an undeserved monopoly on initiation into Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma, this incumbent "Goswami caste" of patrilineal "gurus" had relegated the position and duty of a guru—to practice and teach spiritual knowledge, beginning with discrimination between soul and body—to a function grounded in the bodily conception of life. Inevitably this ascribing of spiritual intent to selfish motives led to further pejoration of Vaiṣṇava society, as the distinction between spiritual and material activities and emotions gradually faded to nil.

The degradation was so severe that most *jāta-gosāñis*—in desecration of the principles of Lord Caitanya's associates, in whose name they claimed sanctity—found no incongruity in their fondness for fish. Some caste Goswamis would toss their remnants of half-eaten fish to their disciples as "*prasāda*"—although they pompously adjudged themselves too pure to take even water from lower-caste disciples (which suggests that they too considered their initiating to have little purificatory value).

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura lambasted the hypocrisy of those who accumulated disciples as a remuneratory and self-aggrandizing function in the name of Kṛṣṇa-*prema.* He pilloried *jāta-gosāñis* as tyrants and traitors, for they donned the garb of Mahāprabhu's followers merely to exploit and not serve Him. Wholly lacking appreciation for His sublime gifts, they were like merchants earning money in His name, sordid racketeers peddling adulterated goods very cheaply. Some *jāta-gosāñis,* even proprietors of temples, did not even have faith in the deities they superficially worshiped, for they subscribed to the *smārta* belief that the deity is merely a

symbolic statue—and highly useful in leveraging contributions from the pockets of the gullible. Also because of their predilection toward *smārta* practices such as demigod worship, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura declared them to be "of the foreign camp."

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura acknowledged that many great devotees and bona fide gurus had appeared in *ācārya* families, yet he pointed out the mistake of accepting genealogical descent as the determinative for *ācārya*-ship. Although some previous recognized Gauḍīya *ācāryas* had recommended the preferability of accepting initiation from a pedigree *brāhmaṇa,* they had never stressed this over the essential *śāstrīya* teaching that the main characteristics of a guru are *śrotriyaṁ brahma-niṣṭham*—he should possess both knowledge of the Vedas as received in a genuine guru-*paramparā* and firm devotion to the Absolute Truth.[36] Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura analogized that the son of a doctor cannot automatically become a physician; his being raised in a medical atmosphere is an advantage, but without first acquiring the prerequisite qualifications he is unfit to treat others, and certainly cannot cure them. Likewise, it is a fallacy to consider descendants of glorious Vaiṣṇavas to be similarly exalted if they do not practically manifest adherence to devotional activities and detachment from worldly affairs and sensual enjoyment; qualification must always be considered over birth, for high parentage is no indicator of *bhakti.*

Simply due to ignorance, misunderstanding, or neglect of these points, the seminal lineages had spawned and prospered as a mundane imposition upon the purely spiritual dharma of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, vitiating it into a commercial venture for upholding the easygoing lifestyle of dynastic *brāhmaṇas.*

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī further protested against householders using Goswami as a family name. He reasoned that because *gosvāmī* means "controller of the senses" and is a title meant particularly for sannyasis, and because family life is a concession for sense gratification, it is unseemly that *gṛhasthas* adopt the title Goswami. He explained, "Just as not all birds are Garuḍa and not all fish are Matsya-avatar, simply by being titled Goswami one does not become equal to Rūpa and Sanātana."[*] Citing the explanations of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, he agreed that a suitably qualified *gṛhastha* may be known as a *gosvāmī,* but added that those foolish members of Goswami families who pass on to their equally unworthy children the appellation Goswami simply for the purpose of accumulating wealth and disciples are so ignorant that they are unfit to be seen.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī maintained that the Goswami *parivāras* were but mundane families who clearly lacked the potency to uphold the purity of or spread Lord Caitanya's mission. He criticized that, antithetical to *tṛṇād api sunīcatā*—the spirit essential to followers of Lord Caitanya—these gurus-by-descent were inordinately proud of their purported high birth and lofty position, wherefrom they deigned to pronounce "benedictions" for the imagined benefit of their ecclesia. He said that the turtles in Vṛndāvana were former *jāta-gosāñis* forced into that lower species because of sinful activities and an offensive mentality. To the great chagrin of "born *brāhmaṇas,*" he discounted their claims to inherited piety by citing from *śāstra:*

rākṣasāḥ kalim āśritya jāyante brahma-yoniṣu
utpannā brāhmaṇa-kule bādhante śrotriyān kṛśān

> In Kali-yuga, demons will take birth in families of *brāhmaṇas* to harass those rare persons conversant with the Vedic way of life.[37]

In his essay "Vaiṣṇava-vaṁśa" Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī expressed that the real family of Vaiṣṇavas is not a product of transformed semen, but consists of those devotees who by substantial transcendental connection form the personal entourage of the Supreme Lord.[38] In his *kīrtana* delineating the Gauḍīya *paramparā* he wrote, *īhārā paramahaṁsa gaurāṅgera nija-vaṁśa,* identifying the exalted Vaiṣṇava *paramahaṁsa* gurus as members of Lord Gaurāṅga's personal *vaṁśa*.[39] † He stated that the Gauḍīya Maṭha is of Narottama-*parivāra,* although this too by inherent spiritual relationship, with no link with the current putative followers of Śrī Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura.

Notwithstanding scathing indictments from the Gauḍīya Maṭha, and from others who were discriminating enough to see through their charade, few *jāta-gosāñis* felt any compunction about their lifestyle.* They considered it their God-given privilege and profession; they were simply doing as their forebears had done, and as long as their disciples were satisfied with this arrangement, then what right did anyone else have to interfere? Nonetheless, *jāta-gosāñis'* proprietary claim to Vaiṣṇava guruship was undermined by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's success in preaching and making disciples, and by his relentless exposure of caste Goswamis as materialists posing as spiritualists for pecuniary purposes. He clearly demonstrated that persons who give mantras and explain *śāstra* in exchange for prestation are businessmen, not gurus, and that no spiritual benefit can be gained from them. And although he specialized in preaching to the educated, his teachings, institution, and functions were open to all, irrespective of caste. Thus he diminished not only the *jāta-gosāñis'* status but also their following, and hence their attendant income.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura summarized his position:

> Seminal *brāhmaṇas* have caused immense damage to the Vedic Vaiṣṇava dharma. Being unqualified yet taking the role of spiritual masters, they simply magnify their attachment to their stomach and genitals. Rather than giving proper *pāñcarātrikī dīkṣā* (Vaiṣṇava initiation) to their disciples, they turn them into monkeys instead of making them like Śiva, turn them away from Viṣṇu instead of making them Vaiṣṇavas, and allow them to indulge in the principles of *varṇāśrama* that are based on sensuous association with women.[40] †

Already the complacent decadence of the *jāta-gosāñis* had provided an impetus for a spate of recusant groups to arise, in defiance of the misbegotten orthodoxy presided over by the *jāta-gosāñis.* Yet Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's attack on the hereditary lineages was far more damning and scholarly than any hitherto, placing its leaders under a spotlight and threatening to upend the whole monolith of perverted Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava society.

In counterpropaganda against Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the caste Goswamis denounced as a crime and a sacrilege his "making himself a *brāhmaṇa,*" his "mixing up all castes and calling them all *brāhmaṇas,*" and especially that he, a non-*brāhmaṇa,* initiated others as *brāhmaṇas.* But unable to stanch the ascent of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, the *jāta-gosāñis* resorted to such low tactics as attempting to turn donors against the mission, making baseless police complaints against Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his chief followers, and even trying to burn the Theistic Exhibition at Māyāpur. Such escapades simply exposed the malintent of the opposition and provoked widespread condemnation of them by the educated community.

Nevertheless, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura did not see all caste Goswamis as bad and was not intrinsically against their being gurus. Although he specifically contested the theory of "guru by birth only," he recognized qualities of devotion and learning in those possessing them, and that certain *jāta-gosāñi* lines had preserved some valuable contributions for *bhajana* life. He compared caste Goswamis to lion cubs raised by sheep and thus unaware of their own prowess, and commented that it would be highly laudable and pleasing if descendants of noted devotees would live up to the ideals of their forefathers.

Nor were all caste Goswamis inimical to him. Circa 1910 the reputed scholar Śrī Atula Kṛṣṇa Goswami, who was extremely ill and seemed sure to die, bequeathed his lifetime collection of books and palm manuscripts to Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī, seeing in him the proper person to appreciate and preserve them. And at the 1913 Kashimbazar Sammilanī, even though considerably senior to Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī, he openly expressed admiration for him. Other *jāta-gosāñis* admitted, "Apart from his criticism of us, everything that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī says is wonderful and worshipable." And throughout the Gauḍa-maṇḍala Parikramā in 1925, almost everywhere Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and his party went they were received cordially, respectfully, and happily by the caste Goswamis who oversaw the numerous *śrīpāṭas* visited. At their seat in Khardaha, the Nityānanda-*vaṁśa* Goswamis expressed their gratitude by saying that while *parikramā* of Vraja-*maṇḍala* was well known, *parikramā* of Gauḍa-*maṇḍala* was a new and welcome innovation.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura greatly esteemed, and was esteemed by, Śrī Madhusūdana Goswami of Vṛndāvana's Rādhā-ramaṇa-gherā, and Śrī Viśvambharānanda-deva Goswami, both from famous Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* families. Although himself a guru of thousands of disciples, Śrī Viśvambharānanda-deva openly proclaimed Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to be the foremost *ācārya* of the day. And Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura stated that throughout his travels in India, he had not met any Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* as intelligent as Śrī Viśvambharānanda-deva, nor one with such genuine understanding of *Ṣaṭ-sandarbha.*[41] During the Gauḍa-maṇḍala Parikramā, when at Gopīvallabhpur, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was approached by the late Viśvambharānanda's son Śrī Gopījanavallabhānanda-deva Goswami for personal spiritual instruction. Thereupon Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī profusely praised Śrī Viśvambharānanda-deva, lauding his scholarship, courage, irrepressible enthusiasm, and unwavering desire to serve the Lord, and advised Gopījanavallabhānanda-deva to act ideally and thereby preserve the honor of his family, particularly his father's reputation.[*]

Perspectives on Caste

Beginning in youth, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura undertook a detailed study of Hindu society with the aim to effect reforms within it. His early works *Baṅge Sāmājikatā* and *Brāhmaṇa o Vaiṣṇavera Tāratamya-viṣayaka Siddhānta* demonstrated detailed knowledge of and insights into the intricacies of Hindu institutions, conventions, customs, rituals, and prejudices. He sought to propagate these perceptions to establish that selfish interest had subjugated the pristine objectives of Vedic culture, as was principally apparent in misconceptions about caste.

The original Vedic social system, *varṇāśrama-dharma,* was a scripturally ordained practical arrangement to engage all classes of people according to their acquired propensities, fostering the gradual spiritual evolution of all participants and culminating in *śuddha-bhakti. Varṇāśrama* society was divided into *brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas,* and *śūdras,* with individuals being gradated by qualification and occupational proclivity, not merely birth.

Caste later became inflexible when less qualified men arrogated privilege to themselves solely on the basis of birth in higher families, claiming that caste was fixed at birth and could not be changed during one's lifetime. Caste, and thus birth, determined occupation, and to a large extent also dress, economic and social status, social duties, and educational opportunities. There was no social ladder. Social mobility was highly limited, and any attempt to avoid norms governing caste status was considered reprehensible, and in some cases punishable by law. According to *śāstrīya* understanding, low birth, which referred particularly to that of *vaiśyas, śūdras* or lesser, was karmic dues for impious activities performed in previous lives, and was typified by uncultured and sinful behavior that further compounded and solidified the fallen position of such luckless persons. The uplift of such unfortunates certainly is the religious duty of *brāhmaṇas,* but when they lost that essential spiritual focus, they became arrogant aristocrats who observed religious rituals as ends in themselves.

Originally *brāhmaṇa* superiority was based on their lifestyle being directly religiously oriented. But when heredity was established as the distinguishing feature of *brāhmaṇas,* the stipulation that they adhere to scripturally ordained standards slackened and eventually vanished. Thus brahmanism degenerated into a hollow shell of formal and often affected piety. Concomitantly, throughout most of India, *śūdras* came to be despised and treated much like domesticated animals and other household chattels. Although the egalitarianism of Mahāprabhu's movement had somewhat alleviated their condition in Bengal, lower castes were still largely debarred from education and civic rights.

Caste stability was supposed to be maintained by endogamous marriage, yet in the distant past, miscegenational unions had gradually led to a proliferation of hundreds and thousands of multi-layered castes and subcastes. Combined with the plethora of regulations and mores governing caste distinctions in different locales, such intermarriage engendered a complex social conglomerate that was staunchly embraced and bulwarked by those produced of it. And because this caste system was misidentified with the *varṇāśrama* organization described in *śāstra,* Hindus considered it divinely ordained and hence were reluctant to spurn it. Engrossed

in scrupulous adherence to its rules and rigmaroles, as defined and upheld by *smārtas,* they tended to take such observances as ends in themselves.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu had never acknowledged this formulaic practice of determining caste and spiritual eligibility by birth, which crippled both material and spiritual progress simply to protect the vested interests of a privileged class. He Himself had appeared in a *brāhmaṇa* family, and being a sannyasi, was the preceptor for all orders of society, but He flouted the stringent social conventions of His time by accepting anyone into His fold and mixing freely with all classes of men. Yet although liberal in social dealings, He and His followers generally observed cultural norms according special respect to born *brāhmaṇas.* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī explained that only when in the company of persons governed by caste considerations did Caitanya Mahāprabhu observe such usages, to avoid disturbances, but among His own devotees He at no time entertained anything resembling the current malicious caste distinction and never discriminated on the basis of caste. On the contrary, His stand was:

> *nīca-jāti nahe kṛṣṇa-bhajane ayogya*
> *sat-kula-vipra nahe bhajanera yogya*
>
> A person born in a low family is not unfit for Kṛṣṇa-*bhajana,* nor is one fit for *bhajana* simply by birth in an aristocratic family of *brāhmaṇas.*
>
> *yei bhaje sei baḍa, abhakta—hīna, chāra*
> *kṛṣṇa-bhajane nāhi jāti-kulādi-vicāra*
>
> Anyone who takes to *bhajana* is exalted, whereas a nondevotee is condemned and abominable. In Kṛṣṇa-*bhajana* there is no consideration of caste or family status. (Cc 3.4.66–67)

By stating this to Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, who had deemed himself fallen and lowborn and thus disqualified to worship Kṛṣṇa, Lord Caitanya unequivocally and for all time established that devotees are never to be judged in terms of race, caste, or birth. Nonetheless, controversy over the respective roles of *brāhmaṇas* and Vaiṣṇavas continued to bubble, becoming inflamed when Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura and others of "lower families" initiated caste *brāhmaṇas.* Subsequently several non-*brāhmaṇa* Vaiṣṇava dynasties had unilaterally adopted brahminical status and the role of initiating *ācāryas.* One such family line, the *ācāryas* of the prominent Śyāmānandī sect, bestowed the *upavīta* upon new initiates regardless of their former caste. Nevertheless, *smārtas* and even many Vaiṣṇavas of caste *brāhmaṇa* background did not approve such uppityness and never fully accepted the legitimacy of these nouveau *brāhmaṇas.* Rigorous social mores that arose against the proliferation of neo-*brāhmaṇas* effectively undid the accommodative spirit of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's movement.

Increasingly lacking the qualities of true *brāhmaṇas* yet still expecting the privileges thereof, the *brāhmaṇa* caste was more a public nuisance than a contribution to society. By the late nineteenth century a still widespread respect for *brāhmaṇas* was gradually becoming

overshadowed by growing awareness of the inconsistency of *brāhmaṇas'* claiming superiority simply due to their birth (even if their behavior was lower than that of their supposed inferiors), and of the many evils inherent in the unmalleable and exploitive caste system, for which *brāhmaṇas,* as its principal beneficiaries, were largely held culpable. The moral festering of the *brāhmaṇa* caste had not gone unnoticed. In Bengal and Orissa, among traditional *brāhmaṇas* and neo-*brāhmaṇas* of purported Vaiṣṇava extract and even *pāṇḍās* in Purī, many ate fish, smoked or chewed tobacco, or performed other debased activities. Instead of giving spiritual knowledge, they were promoting the opposite, the bodily conception of life, by insisting that religious eligibility is determined by birth.

Notwithstanding, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī showed regard to such less qualified descendants of *brāhmaṇa* families because of their dignified lineage. For example, when a boy from a *brāhmaṇa* family was caught filching from the Maṭha, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī suggested impunity on the basis of the lad's descent. He justified such preferential treatment by citing how Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi was beaten by Lords Jagannātha and Baladeva for disrespecting *pāṇḍās*.[42] And he recognized and offered suitable respect to the still considerable number of born *brāhmaṇas* who by learning and religious practice actually maintained brahminical culture and did not misuse their social eminence to take undue advantage of others.[43]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura recognized the defects were inevitable in *varṇāśrama-dharma,* it being a system meant to regulate imperfection:

> This secular arrangement [*varṇāśrama-dharma*] is not recommended by the scriptures as constituting the ideal of social arrangement. On the contrary it is declared to be a necessary evil to have a system of this kind in the degenerate state into which society had fallen. This is a very important point and one, if its significance is at all grasped, should be able to save us from much of the parochial enthusiasm that has been quite wrongly wasted upon the *varṇāśrama* arrangement by its mechanical admirers. It is explicitly declared by the scriptures that, if the theistic disposition is general, there can be only one class in society. The system of one class had actually prevailed formerly when the people had been generally theistic by disposition. With the appearance of open atheism arose the necessity of establishing the secular gradations of society. It is a defective provision against the outbreak of barbarism, a tendency which is due to the weakening of the theistic instinct.[44]

Yet he cited the authority of *śāstra* for his upholding of *varṇāśrama-dharma* as the best social arrangement for guiding deluded mankind toward the goal of *śuddha-bhakti.* This was anathema to the *bābājīs,* who by not understanding the context of Lord Caitanya's statement that *varṇāśrama* is exterior (Cc 2.8.59), had unilaterally rejected it as wholly irrelevant to *bhakti.* Conversely, the *smārtas* and caste Goswamis promoted *āsura-varṇāśrama,* the exploitive caste system of conventional Hinduism.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura explained that the original intention of dividing society into four orders was to facilitate transmission of spiritual guidance from enlightened *brāhmaṇas,* but now,

because degraded descendants of *brāhmaṇas* tended to exploit rather than serve and assist other stratas, the entire Hindu world is governed by a perverted hierarchy, the *āsura-varṇāśrama.* However authorized and traditional they may seem, the outlook and activities of such present-day *brāhmaṇas* are extrinsic to the objective of human life, and thus all their recitation of *śāstra* and observance of rituals render no genuine benefit.

Most Hindus still acceded to the status quo of priests who merely pretended to be pure—yet dissenters were providing several alternatives. The new *bhadra-loka*—who were educated with a worldview wholly different from the traditional and who thus considered olden ways irrelevant to modern urban life—floated neo-Hindu societies, among which the Brahmos and the Ramakrishna Mission were most prominent in Bengal. And many of the lowest classes, those most strangulated by the caste system, signalled their rejection of it by joining the *kartābhajās* and similar reactionary groups.

Amid this breakdown of autochthonous societal systems and values, and its attendant chaos, confusion, and speculation in the field of religion, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was the first Gauḍīya *ācārya* to stress the need for *daiva-varṇāśrama,* a symbiotic meritocracy within which all sections of society cooperate in Hari-*sevā* as per the conclusion of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.13):

> *ataḥ pumbhir dvija-śreṣṭhā varṇāśrama-vibhāgaśaḥ*
> *svanuṣṭhitasya dharmasya saṁsiddhir hari-toṣaṇam*
>
> Therefore, O best among the twice-born, the highest perfection one can achieve by discharging the duties prescribed for his *varṇa* and *āśrama* is to satisfy Hari.

Daiva-varṇāśrama-dharma was meant to stratify and regulate society to maximize each man's psychophysical propensities while helping him make tangible spiritual progress. In his writings, especially *Śrī Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta,* Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had expressed that although caste and other social considerations were ultimately extrinsic to the intrinsic function of the soul, without instituting genuine *varṇāśrama-dharma* alongside the propagation of *śuddha-bhakti,* many anomalies would arise, such as an increased number of *prākṛta-sahajiyās.* He thus deemed that for all but highly elevated devotees, *varṇāśrama-dharma* is a requisite for cultivation of *bhakti,* and gave pertinent directions for instituting it with adjustments suitable for modern society.

Regarding eligibility for brahminical status, in *Jaiva Dharma* Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had reconciled seemingly inconsonant *śāstrīya* statements—those that indicated brahmanism by birth and those that promoted *brāhmaṇatva* through attainment of necessary qualities—by differentiating between *vyavahārika* (conventional) and *pāramārthika* (spiritual) *brāhmaṇas,* the former classification based on caste, the latter on spiritual qualities. He analyzed *brāhmaṇatva* as a stage or qualification of Vaiṣṇavism, and Vaiṣṇavism as the fruit of *brāhmaṇatva;* thus birth in a *brāhmaṇa* family could qualify one as a "conventional *brāhmaṇa*" eligible (after going through requisite procedures and training) for brahminical

duties such as performing sacrifices. Yet simply by taking to *śuddha-bhakti,* anyone born in any caste becomes a "spiritual *brāhmaṇa,*" a Vaiṣṇava, a true *brāhmaṇa* in the fullest sense; indeed even aspiring servants of Vaiṣṇavas are superior to conventional *brāhmaṇas.*

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī followed Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's lead in offering *pāñcarātrikī dīkṣā* and the *upavīta* to persons, regardless of their caste, who had taken to Hari-*bhakti.* Because the *brāhmaṇas'* sacred thread was associated with high qualifications, by offering it to all irrespective of family background Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī sought to establish that, irrespective of birthcaste, anyone who practices Hari-*bhakti* automatically acquires the characteristics of a true *brāhmaṇa,* and hence also eligibility for performing sacrifices and deity worship. This he justified by upholding *Pañcarātra* as the essence of the Vedas; therefore, to undergo *pāñcarātrika-saṁskāras* is sufficient qualification for receiving *vaidikī-dīkṣā* and its concomitant bestowal of Brahma-*gāyatrī* and the *upavīta.*

> Due to widespread discrepancies in the practice of *garbhādhāna-saṁskāra,* it is more reasonable and faultless to ascertain a person as twice-born by his symptoms, nature, and *āgama-dīkṣa* (*pāñcarātrika* initiation), rather than by seminal consideration.[45 *]

The symbolism of the *upavīta* was crucial—had it not been given, then likely there would have been significantly less protest at Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's bestowing *pāñcarātrikī dīkṣā.* His giving *upavītas* was to stress that Vaiṣṇava initiation is in no way inferior to the *upanayana* of caste *brāhmaṇas.* Moreover, he declared the "sacred" threads of born *brāhmaṇas* mere cotton strings worn for undeserved prestige and privilege, and that despite their *upanayana,* without such *pāñcarātrikī dīkṣā* even such "born *brāhmaṇas*" are actually *śūdras.* He would quote *Viṣṇu-yāmala:*

> *aśuddhāḥ śūdra-kalpā hi brāhmaṇāḥ kali-sambhavāḥ*
> *teṣām āgama-mārgeṇa śuddhir na śrota-vartmanā*
>
> *Brāhmaṇas* born in Kali-yuga are actually *śūdras.* Their so-called Vedic path of *karma* is polluted and cannot purify them. They can be purified only by following the way of the *āgamas,* or *pāñcarātrika-vidhi.*

Thus Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī maintained that although caste *brāhmaṇas* think that *brāhmaṇas* are created by biological reproduction in the manner of hogs and dogs, the position of a Vaiṣṇava is the inherent quality of the soul and has nothing to do with interactions of semen and ovum. Additionally, he upheld that regardless of lineage, anyone who worships demigods cannot be accepted as a *brāhmaṇa,* for in *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa had certified demigod worshipers as fools, and a fool cannot be a *brāhmaṇa.*[46] This standpoint was so cataclysmic that even certain persons closely associated with Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, particularly some disciples of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, protested when he introduced it. But he cared naught for their objections, fixed as he was in the *bhakti-siddhānta* that anyone from any background can become twice-born by the process of initiation, and that the position of a Vaiṣṇava is categorically above that of a caste *brāhmaṇa.*

A basic tenet of the *jāta-gosāñis* and others who considered themselves orthodox Gauḍīyas was recognition of the authority of the Six Gosvāmīs, who in their literature had offered many verses delineating the *bhakti-siddhānta* on this issue, for instance:

> *yathā kāñcanatāṁ yāti kāṁsyaṁ rasa-vidhānataḥ*
> *tathā dīkṣā-vidhānena dvijatvaṁ jāyate nṛṇām*
>
> As bell metal can be turned into gold when treated with mercury, a disciple initiated by a bona fide guru immediately attains the position of a *brāhmaṇa.*[47]

> *viṣṇu-bhakti-vihīnā ye caṇḍālāḥ parikīrtitāḥ*
> *caṇḍālā api vai śresthā hari-bhakti-parāyaṇāḥ*
>
> Persons devoid of Viṣṇu-*bhakti* are declared to be *caṇḍālas,* whereas those possessed of Hari-*bhakti,* even if born in *caṇḍāla* families, are the best of men.[48]

Yet even though other previous Gauḍīya *ācāryas* had overstepped caste conventions on the basis of *śāstrīya* injunction, to date no Gauḍīyas had imagined actually initiating *caṇḍālas* as *brāhmaṇas,* for even among suppositive Gauḍīyas caste consciousness had remained nearly as chronic as in conformist Hindu society, with ostensible Vaiṣṇavas of lower caste maintaining the utmost respect for even degraded non-Vaiṣṇava *brāhmaṇas,* who reciprocally traduced Vaiṣṇavas born in lower castes as *śūdras* at best and thus execrably inferior.[*] But Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would quote verses stating that persons who classify Vaiṣṇavas according to caste are of hellish intelligence and destined to suffer terribly for that offense. He particularly cited from *Padma Purāṇa, vaiṣṇave jātibuddhir... yasya vā nārakī saḥ:* "One who opines a Vaiṣṇava to belong to any caste is a resident of hell."[†]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's liberal awarding of the *upavīta* was therefore an assertion of what had till then been largely theoretical: a Vaiṣṇava is beyond material distinctions of caste, and by following Vaiṣṇava principles even a man from the lowest caste immediately becomes fit to act on the highest religious and social level, that of a *brāhmaṇa.* Especially since Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was neither of *brāhmaṇa* caste nor had received the mantra from any known source, his giving Brahma-*gāyatrī* to non–born-*brāhmaṇas* caused a furor among the caste *brāhmaṇas,* whose long-standing social privileges nonetheless seemed headed for destruction at his hands.[‡] As Professor Sanyal noted:

> The most stubborn opponents of any proposal for the revival of the *varṇāśrama* organization are sure to come from the ranks of the caste *brāhmaṇas.* For centuries the hereditary *brāhmaṇas* have been enjoying the monopoly of power over the religious affairs of the Hindus. Much ingenuity has been exercised in changing inconvenient readings of the old texts, interpolating corrupt opinion, and manufacturing śāstric literature in aid of the supremacy of the caste *brāhmaṇas.* The appeal to *śāstras* is not so much dreaded by these reactionaries, thanks to these precautions, as the appeal to common sense.

> The special supremacy of the caste *brāhmaṇas* is however opposed to the democratic spirit of the age. It is also being assailed by the labors of scholars who are restoring the proper reading of the texts of the *śāstras,* on the deliberate perversions of which the superstitious and irrational upholders of a spurious system have been accustomed up till now to place their chief reliance.[49]

Although many caste *brāhmaṇas* looked upon Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura as their foremost enemy, his campaign against their artificial hegemony was actually kindness upon them, to liberate them from caste vanity. In the words of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda:

> One who takes to chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra offenselessly immediately becomes situated transcendentally and therefore has no need of being initiated with a sacred thread, but my guru-*mahārāja* introduced this sacred thread because a Vaiṣṇava was being mistaken as belonging to a material caste. To accept a Vaiṣṇava as belonging to the material caste system is a hellish consideration (*nārakī buddhi*). Therefore, to save the general populace from being offenders to a Vaiṣṇava, he persistently introduced this sacred thread ceremony.[50]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī did not judge devotees according to their family background, but treated them as Vaiṣṇavas beyond worldly designations. He maintained that whatever caste they were born into, Vaiṣṇavas are the best of *brāhmaṇas,* indeed the only true *brāhmaṇas.* He compared conventional *brāhmaṇas* to paise and Vaiṣṇavas to rupees, for *vaiṣṇavatva* (the position of a Vaiṣṇava) includes *brāhmaṇatva* (the position of being a *brāhmaṇa*). He explained that those who claim *brāhmaṇatva* on the basis of birth may be respected as "conventional *brāhmaṇas,*" if they actually possess brahminical qualities; but if they lack Viṣṇu-*bhakti* they are not comparable to Vaiṣṇavas, who are genuine, complete, transcendental *brāhmaṇas.* Moreover, even if coming from an untouchable family, a Vaiṣṇava is not only touchable but worshipable, and may become the guru of *brāhmaṇas*.

Yet the effect of this appeal to common sense was incendiary, which revealed that the conventional *brāhmaṇas,* supposedly the most intelligent class, were actually not very sensible. Often when a caste *brāhmaṇa* joined the Gauḍīya Maṭha it meant immediate and total ostracization from his community, due to Gauḍīya Maṭha members' "low-class habits" and nonconformance to caste rules, for example, eating leftover food and eating more than once between sunrise and sunset or vice versa. *Smārtas* were particularly appalled that Vaiṣṇavas of *brāhmaṇa* background would fraternize and eat with, and even embrace, persons whom the *smārtas* considered *śūdras.* Rather than recognizing that by accepting Vaiṣṇava dharma, persons born in the *śūdra* caste had been elevated to the brahminical platform, *smārtas* deemed Vaiṣṇavism an evil that induced *brāhmaṇas* to lose their caste by mixing with *śūdras.*

Amidst rapid social change, numerous conventional *brāhmaṇas* were experiencing increasing economic and social difficulties. Aspiring for more than the poverty that often was the *brāhmaṇa's* lot, increasing numbers swallowed their inbred pride and sent their sons for

modern education and secular employment, which technically rendered them *śūdras,* though few would admit it. Caste status meaning little in the workplace, *brāhmaṇas* were forced to mingle and compete on equal terms with persons of lower birth. Many *brāhmaṇas,* naturally pious by dint of their *śāstrīya* learning and religious culture, and uncomfortable in their present situation but with little recourse or inclination to revert to the traditional, were undergoing an acute identity crisis. The more thoughtful and spiritually intuitive among them could not but be impressed by the saintly ethos of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, the unique meaningfulness of its message, and the transcendental rather than ritual purity of its speakers. Still, generally only after repeated hearing could a caste *brāhmaṇa* wholeheartedly adopt the principles of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, for having imbibed a scriptural understanding quite different from that given by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, to convert from caste consciousness was possible only if they were fully convinced of the superiority of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The great majority of *brāhmaṇas* who joined the Gauḍīya Maṭha were of this modernized type (mostly from *smārta* rather than *jāta-gosāñi* stock). Their knowledge and culture proving to be assets in assimilating and propagating *śuddha-bhakti,* several of them became leading preachers. Each instance of self-surrender of a *brāhmaṇa* was a special victory for Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his adherents, for it would further promenade the genuineness and potency of the Gauḍīya Maṭha message.

Such "born *brāhmaṇas*" were allowed to continue wearing their *smārta upavītas* until reinitiated by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī with Vaiṣṇava mantras and given a new, transcendentally sanctified thread. To qualify for performing *arcana* in the Gauḍīya Maṭha even *brāhmaṇas* by birth had to receive *pāñcarātrikī dīkṣā* from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. Yet at the Yogapīṭha he inherited and continued the system that deity worship be performed exclusively by born *brāhmaṇas.* Before the mission was established he had to rely largely on hired *pūjārīs,* but later this function was performed by his disciples of *brāhmaṇa* extract.[*]

Gradually Gauḍīya Maṭha *brāhmaṇas* became widely accepted as *brāhmaṇas*—or as more than *brāhmaṇas,* as authentic sadhus—and accorded commensurate respect. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura wanted his followers to warrant that esteem by exhibiting genuine brahminical attributes of peacefulness, self-control, austerity, purity, tolerance, honesty, knowledge, wisdom, and religiousness, further embellished by the superlative Vaiṣṇava qualities of mercy, humility, truthfulness, equal dealings, faultlessness, magnanimity, mildness, cleanliness, detachment from material possessions, and so on.[51] His intention was not to inflate the present genre of indulgent *brāhmaṇas,* but to create real *brāhmaṇas* in contradistinction to those so recognized merely by dint of their family name and a thread across their chest. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura stressed that the brahminical standing of Vaiṣṇavas is not in competition with the societal rank of conventional *brāhmaṇas,* because Vaiṣṇavas identify themselves not in terms of worldly prestige but as servants of the servants of Kṛṣṇa. As stated by Lord Caitanya:

nāhaṁ vipro na ca nara-patir nāpi vaiśyo na śūdro
nāhaṁ varṇī na ca gṛha-patir no vana-stho yatir vā
kintu prodyan nikhila-paramānanda-pūrṇāmṛtābdher

gopī-bhartuḥ pada-kamalayor dāsa-dāsānudāsaḥ

> I am not a *brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya,* or *śūdra.* Nor am I a *brahmacārī, gṛhastha, vānaprastha,* or *sannyāsī.* I identify Myself only as the servant of the servant of the servant of the lotus feet of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the maintainer of the *gopīs.* He is a brilliant ocean of nectar and universal transcendental bliss. (Cc 2.13.80)

To those who remonstrated that for a Vaiṣṇava to flaunt a *brāhmaṇa's* thread violated Lord Caitanya's spirit of *tṛṇād api sunīcatā,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī explained that a Vaiṣṇava's understanding of brahminical status is quite different from that of supercilious caste *brāhmaṇas:* a Vaiṣṇava does not exhibit his *upavīta* with the conception that "I am a *brāhmaṇa* to be respected by everyone," but rather as a sign of purification of his body via the guru and thus being established in transcendental service. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī further elucidated that the *upavīta* indicates pure devotion, the eternal propensity of the soul to serve Kṛṣṇa and His devotees, in which there is no room for egoism. Hence the *upavīta* graces the body of a devotee not in contradiction to, but as a symbol of, the teachings of the *tṛṇād api sunīcena* verse.

By awarding brahminical and *sannyāsa* standing to persons of lower castes and giving genuine *dīkṣā* to those already formally initiated by caste Goswamis, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura boldly overstepped social norms and invited charges of sacrilege, thus apparently deliberately inviting controversy. He explained that this colliding with the established social order was not precipitated by himself, but was a consequence of his effort to create a conducive social condition for practicing Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti:*

> My social organization initiative was meant wholly for devotees. I never intended to reform nondevotional and atheistic society. Yet I was obliged to institute a method whereby devotees could perform their spiritual functions without hindrance. In removing obstacles for devotees, I created obstacles for *smārtas* and other nondevotees. I knew that *daiva-varṇāśrama* constitutes the essence of ritualistic *varṇāśrama,* and that the presently manifest *varṇāśrama* is an altered and ruined form of the eternal *varṇāśrama.* Since the Vaiṣṇava systems of performing *Śrāddha* and other rituals are aids for the spiritual wellbeing of practicing devotees, I was obliged to introduce such ceremonies to save devotees from the torturing institutions of *smārtas* and atheists.
>
> To provide an alternative to *smārta*-dominated society, initially I attempted to gather some capable persons suitable for serving Vaiṣṇavas. When for the purpose of serving the Lord I first tried to reestablish *varṇāśrama-dharma,* I did so without taking it upon myself to disturb the general atheistic society.[52]

Inevitably his endeavors did cause disturbance, so to vindicate his position among the thinking public Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī repeatedly dilated on the subject of *daiva-varṇāśrama* vis-à-vis the tragedy of the current *āsura-varṇāśrama.* This theme was especially relevant in light of the activities of the Brahmo Samāj and other Hindu reformers who recognized evil in

the caste system and wanted to overhaul or even dismantle it. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī stressed that *varṇāśrama* is necessary but should be organized on the basis of service to Śrī Hari.

All of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's followers verbally accepted and in practical dealings observed the principle of *brāhmaṇa*-hood by the *pāñcarātrika* system, whereby all Gauḍīya Maṭha *brāhmaṇas* regardless of their status at birth were supposed to be equal as Vaiṣṇavas and *brāhmaṇas*. And in magazine articles penned by Gauḍīya Maṭha devotees born in *brāhmaṇa* families, pre-initiation names were cited to impress upon outsiders that "born *brāhmaṇas*" were members of a society that opposed traditional notions of brahmanism.[*] Yet it was not easy to totally vanquish caste consciousness. As in broader Hindu society the caste of each person was known and was a major factor in social interaction, so too in the Gauḍīya Maṭha the background of each member was known to one another, and at least subtle distinctions remained. To give special respect to born *brāhmaṇas* was so deeply ingrained in Hindu culture that to do so seemed natural even among these transcendentalists who preached against it.

Nor were all Gauḍīya Maṭha members from *brāhmaṇa* families reticent about their lineage, which although generally tolerated, was not much appreciated by other disciples. Only half-jokingly, the "born *brāhmaṇa*" wag Śrī Kṛṣṇānanda Brahmacārī warned a fresh recruit of brahminical stock to camouflage his aristocracy to avoid being harried by certain *maṭha-vāsīs* of low extraction who were bellicosely anti-*brāhmaṇa*. And sometimes Kṛṣṇānanda Prabhu had the *brahmacārīs* in stitches by theatrically begging the blessings of godbrothers of lower birth, declaring himself less fortunate and unqualified for *bhakti* due to his caste pride and being a *rākṣasa* born in a *brāhmaṇa* family.[†]

Śrī Saṁvidānanda dāsa sent a letter to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura inquiring of the possible fallout of their guru-*mahārāja's* social initiative:

> If a caste *śūdra* is initiated as a Vaiṣṇava *brāhmaṇa* yet obliged to marry solely within his birthcaste, even if marrying another Gauḍīya Maṭha devotee or offspring thereof, then it appears that despite all their protestations to the contrary, Vaiṣṇavas ultimately do not recognize him as a true *brāhmaṇa,* and indeed uphold the caste system they purport to oppose. If a Vaiṣṇava may marry only within his birthcaste, then in the marriage ceremony and social dealings associated with it he will be obliged to follow the customs of his caste; then others also will inevitably accept him as a member of that caste. And if a Vaiṣṇava is obliged to follow caste rules, he compromises his Vaiṣṇava principles when complying with those of the *smārtas,* for one contradicts the other. Or if Vaiṣṇavas violate the rules of their birthcaste—for instance, by eating with other Vaiṣṇavas deemed untouchable by *smārtas*—then why should *smārtas* accommodate them when asked to undertake marriage arrangements with caste Hindus?[53]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura responded:

> I do not know what the fate would be of persons in a devotional society who formed

themselves into a different caste. They might be given the option to retain their former caste practices, for example, in marriage among themselves, or if they were sincere and courageous enough, they might rid themselves of the shackles of a mistaken society. I leave it to individuals to consider their own circumstantial necessities.

Those who retain the views of *smārta* society cannot subscribe to the Vaiṣṇava viewpoint, and you can judge for yourself the difference. *Daiva-varṇāśrama* should be the only principle by which to recognize individuals and decide which caste they belong to.

If you carefully reflect on the *arcye viṣṇau śilā-dhīḥ* verse, you will be able to understand my way of thinking.[*] The main point is that there is no need for Vaiṣṇavas to be included within the classifications of ordinary society.[54]

It thus appears that, in view of the tremendous difficulties his disciples would have to face if pressured to transgress caste rules of endogamous marriage, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura did not insist that they do so, even though it would have been the logical development of his reform.[†]

Bāulas and Related Groups

Āulas, bāulas, daraveśas, and *sāṅis* were closely related—all adhered to similar mixes of tantrism, Māyāvāda, and supposed *bhakti,* with mystical Sufi influences. Some *bāulas* were born in Muslim families and still professed to be Muslims. Among ordinary villagers not sufficiently educated or philosphically inclined to distinguish between the multiform *apa-sampradāyas,* these and other mutant groups collectively came to be known in common parlance as *bāulas.* The word *bāula* is probably derived from the Sanskrit *vātula* (mad) or *vyākula* (bewildered).

Particularly among the lower strata of Bengali society, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's unprecedented transcendental madness was widely considered a prototype for the apparently psychotic derangement of holy men and women, which was highly respected as an exalted state of religious absorption. Such madness, or imitation of it, prevailed not only among Vaiṣṇavas and adherents of Vaiṣṇava offshoot cults, but also among *śāktas* and others. However, Mahāprabhu's ecstasies were not only unparalleled, but inimitable, which imitators such as *bāulas* did not understand. *Bāulas* claimed that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu had been one of them, but their origin was obscure and probably predated His advent.

Bāulas' specialty was deliberate cultivation of madness. Some practiced tantra and exercised occult powers. Not surprisingly, they were often viewed as hostile and irrational. Traditionally, *bāulas* lived as wandering minstrels and beggars with "only the wind as home," although a few stayed in a fixed place with a wife or somewhat steady mistress. A typical *bāula* would dress garishly, and his trademark *ālkhāliā* (a nearly ankle-length tunic), usually patchwork and often sadhu-red, revealed Islamic influence. He might bunch his hair in a topknot or keep straggly tresses and a beard, mark his forehead with something resembling Vaiṣṇava *tilaka* (perhaps together with non-Vaiṣṇava *tilaka*), adorn his neck, chest, and arms with assorted beads and

amulets, including the *tulasī-mālā* of Vaiṣṇavas and the *rudrākṣa* of Śaivas, and carry the *tulasī japa* beads of Vaiṣṇavas along with the Muslim rosary.

Numerous but committedly unorganized, sworn to nonconformity yet identifiable as a distinct sect, *bāulas* emphasized freedom from doctrine and organized religion and from caste and other social norms. As did many tantrics, *śāktas,* and others, *bāulas* took pride in being *aśāstrīya* —considering scriptural directives as restrictive to the immediate experience of *bhāva* (which they sought to invoke). Most *bāulas* saw themselves not as Hindus or Muslims or in between, but simply as *bāulas,* practitioners of *bāula-dharma.* All *bāulas* shared only one belief in common—that God is hidden within the heart of man and neither priest, prophet, nor the ritual of any organized religion will help one to find Him there. They felt that both temple and mosque block the path to truth; the search for God must be carried out individually and independently.[55] Although outwardly flamboyant, *bāulas* were secretive about their esoteric doctrines and practices, which were based on a complex mysticism ultimately meant to awaken a hypothetical inner ecstasy called *jīyante maraṇa* (living death)—a state they described as complete cessation of all physical and mental activity, which they equated with the topmost divinity.

Notwithstanding such high-sounding aspirations, *bāula* practices were wholly *tāmasic*—for instance, their *pañca-makāra-sādhana* and use of ganja.[*] At any of their many *mahotsavas* held in various locations of Bengal, a *bāula* might unite with a *sādhikā* yet release her at the next *mahotsava* and connect with another *sādhikā,* leaving the former to be picked up by some other *bāula.*[†]

Bāula songs were riddled with catachreses, especially in employing the vocabulary of *bhakti* to indicate an ineffable absolute, and thus were largely incomprehensible to the uninitiated. Composed in earthy village language and sung plaintively, often impromptu by a solo performer strumming the one-stringed *ektārā* in accompaniment, *bāula* ballads spoke directly to the music-loving, pathos-inclined Bengali psyche, and significantly influenced the broader *kīrtana* culture. After Rabindranath Tagore and other influential mainstream poets began to laud *bāula* rebelliousness, freedom from social mores, and artistic creativity and feeling, the *bāulas'* status changed dramatically to that of folk heroes epitomizing the Bengali soul, and eventually *bāula* concerts in various cities afforded the *bhadra-loka* an opportunity to appreciate *bāulas* from a distance and in a conveniently sterilized fashion.

Āula is probably an altered form of *ārta* or *ātura,* both of which mean "distressed" and are often used in Gauḍīya literature to describe certain states of intense transcendental ecstasy that outwardly appear distressful. The related word *āulaya* (overwhelmed), used in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* denotes absorption in Kṛṣṇa-*prema.*[56] *Āulas* misapplied such descriptions to claim legitimacy for feigning divine ecstasy in the manner of *prākṛta-sahajiyās.* Although *āulas* were often identified as Vaiṣṇavas due to similarity of appearance, many being shaven-headed with *śikhā* and decorated with Vaiṣṇava *tilaka,* their activities were wholly non-Vaiṣṇava.

The word *āula* could also be derived from the Arabic *āuliya* (proximity), meaning one who is

close to God. A class of *āulas,* mostly of Muslim extract and much influenced by Sufism, employed Koranic rather than *śāstra*-derived terms and imagery; its members had long beards and were distinguished from *bāulas* by not having mustaches. *Āulas* indulged in tantric sex with the supposition that by exciting lust they could attain beatific love. Each *āula* "sadhu" was typically surrounded by many women, and the married members of their community freely switched sexual partners. *Āulas* considered either that they were beyond Vedic injunctions or that their practices constituted the essence of the Vedas, although their ideology was basically an elaborate excuse for illicit sexual indulgence. Another connotation of *āula,* which Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī derived from Farsi, is "first" or "best"; in other words, those who think themselves foremost Vaiṣṇavas are afflicted by the *āula* mentality.[57 *]

daraveśas were pseudo-renunciants who, although of Hindu origin, dressed in semblance of Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī when he was disguised as a Muslim to flee the kingdom of Gauḍa. Debased ascetics with an augmented admixture of Islamic influence, *daraveśas* were often gurus of *bāulas.*[†]

The *sāṅis'* hallmark was total freedom from any convention, which supposedly indicated their high spiritual attainment. Hence a *sāṅi* might sometimes dress as a Hindu sannyasi, at other times as a Muslim fakir, or go entirely naked. *Sāṅis* observed few restrictions of any kind and would even take wine and beef.

Kartābhajās

The founder of the *kartābhajā* sect, the *daraveśa* Āulacāṅda (c. 1686– 1779), had promulgated worship of Kṛṣṇa, rejecting demigod worship and taking of flesh food, yet his teachings incorporated Āula heresies and strongly veered toward the mystical, and especially toward impersonalism, as evidenced by the defining principle of his sect: equating the guru with God.

After Āulacāṅda's death most *kartābhajās* accepted the pontiffship of Kartā Rāma Śaraṇa Pāl, a leading disciple who stressed even more fanatical *bhajā* (worship) of the *kartā* (incumbent master), acclaiming him as God incarnate, whose every word and act was to be lauded as divine and blindly obeyed. Thus *kartābhajā* came to be a synonym for "sycophant."

Kartābhajās had their own "holy book," the *Bhāvera-gīta,* consisting largely of songs composed by Dulālacāṅda, the son of and successor Kartā after Rāma Śaraṇa. Resembling *bāula* compositions in being decipherable only by initiates, much of the text was purposely contradictory and puzzling. The most famous dictum was "to be a *kartābhajā,* a woman must become a *hijrā,* and a man become a eunuch."[*] Certain *kartābhajās* were reputed as effective magical healers—Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had recorded that as a young man he was cured by a *kartābhajā.*

Although *kartābhajās* claimed that Āulacāṅda was a reemerged form of Lord Caitanya, and many of their practices resembled those of Vaiṣṇavas, their rituals barely mentioned either Caitanya or Kṛṣṇa, and they also chanted the various names of Kālī and Khodā (Allah),

considering all equal epithets of the *kartā.* Their main pilgrimage site was Ghoshpara, Nadia District, where was preserved the residence of Rāma Śaraṇa and his wife Satī, who were identified respectively as the *ādi-puruṣa* (original enjoyer; original male principle) and *ādya-śakti* (original energy; original female principle; Durgā). Hordes of *bāulas* would congregate at Ghoshpara for an annual three-day festival, and accordingly, *kartābhajās* were often mistaken to be a sect of *bāulas.* As were *bāulas, kartābhajās* were anti-establishment, given to crypticism, secretive regarding esoterica, and adherent to the doctrine of *jīyante maraṇa* as the highest goal. Yet the two were significantly dissimilar in that *kartābhajās* observed certain moral principles—for example, they were enjoined to marry and be true to their partners and to be vegetarian at least on Fridays, on which day sex was proscribed even within wedlock.

Kartābhajās also differed from *bāulas,* and indeed from all other *apa-sampradāyas,* in being well organized and spiritedly proselytical. Becoming a powerful revolt against the doctrinaire caste Goswamis and *smārtas, kartābhajās* converted thousands of the downtrodden—landless laborers, peasants, and traditional craftsmen disadvantaged both by colonial economic controls and the exclusivism of The Company *(*their derogatory term for the orthodox clergy and their clientele), which *kartābhajās* declared bankrupt and from whose ruins had arisen the new *kartābhajā* corporation, which "did not transact business in the name of religion." In time, *kartābhajā* appeal diminished due to factionalism caused by succession disputes, stinging critiques of their declined moral standards, and disillusionment that the *kartās* themselves had become like Company gentry, living well from coerced donations.[58] Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura commented:

> From Gaura-*bhajā* (worship of Gaura), one faction has screwed out guru-*bhajā* or *kartābhajā.* Their idea is that the guru is Kṛṣṇa, so no need to otherwise worship Kṛṣṇa. All followers of these independent mundane intellectuals who adhere to atheistic doctrines claim that their sensuously mad so-called gurus, who resemble worn-out cows that cannot give anything, are Kṛṣṇa. Such followers are themselves attached to sense gratification and mislead many similarly demented people into such offensive activities.[59]

Ativāḍīs

Ativāḍīs had been tremendously influential in popularizing *bhakti* throughout Orissa.[*] The Oriya rendition of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* by *ativāḍī* founder Jagannātha dāsa had become so integral to Oriya culture that many of its verses were frequently cited in everyday dealings. Documentation about Jagannātha dāsa is mainly from old *ativāḍī* writings, which claim him to be a contemporary of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in Purī. But these accounts are murky. For instance, the in-house *ativāḍī* list of *ācāryas* prior to and following Jagannātha dāsa indicate that he was either noncontemporary to Mahāprabhu or would have been just an infant at the time of His disappearance.

According to legend, Jagannātha dāsa would introduce himself as a disciple of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, even though he had dissociated from Haridāsa and was propagating non-Gauḍīya

practices such as inverting the two couplets of the *mahā-mantra* and covering the mouth while chanting. Sidestepping the protocol of first taking permission from the Lord's secretary Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara, Jagannātha dāsa once directly approached Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to utter his own translation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. To avoid him the Lord said, "A fallen soul like Myself is not worthy to hear *Bhāgavatam* composed by an author of your stature." Then Jagannātha dāsa declared that once in meditation he had seen Lord Caitanya appearing from Kṛṣṇa's laughter, and himself from that of Rādhārāṇī. The Lord replied, "You have become *ativāḍī* (too great)."

If this incident actually took place, then Caitanya Mahāprabhu's rejoinder should be understood as sarcasm. Yet on the basis of that alleged reply, Jagannātha dāsa and his followers fatuously deemed themselves superior to Mahāprabhu and His associates in judgment, logic, and knowledge of scripture, and thus contravened Mahāprabhu's cardinal principle to consider oneself lower than straw. Jagannātha dāsa's too-greatness was further demonstrable in his adding five personally composed chapters to his rendition of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* and in alleging to have exhibited an eight-armed form, apparently to outdo Lord Caitanya, who had famously manifested six arms to Śrī Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya.

Jagannātha dāsa's sweet singing attracted many women followers, whom he engaged in massaging his body. When brought before Pratāparudra Mahārāja for indecent behavior, he claimed to see no difference between men and women, but was nonetheless imprisoned for conduct unbecoming a sadhu.[*] Pratāparudra Mahārāja also punitively reclaimed the ashram he had previously donated to him, so Jagannātha dāsa founded another on the seashore, which came to be named Sata Laharī Maṭha, according to a legend that by mystic command Jagannātha dāsa had forced back the ocean a distance of seven (*sata*) waves (*laharī*) to create space for the building.

In a study of the *ativāḍīs* conducted during his residence in Orissa, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura estimated that fifteen thousand lived in that region. Most were from lower classes and were married, with the renunciants of the sect manning its several *maṭhas.* Operating as a secret brotherhood, some *ativāḍīs* were white magicians with occult power, which they employed, for instance, to cure disease. Most were addicted to ganja and opium, under the influence of which they would compose *mālikās*—individualized compilations of esoteric insights and prophecies typically warning to prepare for the impending doomsday—recitation of which further fortified their mystique with the credulous public. *Ativāḍīs* often exploited their considerable influence for political ends, were fiercely nationalist, anti-British, and pro-Oriya, and were feared for their fanaticism.

Although ostensibly a *bhakti* cult, the writings and sayings of the *ativāḍīs* were stacked with impersonalism. Certain *ativāḍīs* circulated fabricated writings stating that Lord Caitanya would again advent, and on that pretext a few wicked persons masqueraded as Kṛṣṇa, Caitanya, Balarāma, and other forms of Bhagavān. In 1871, with much difficulty and risking his life, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had arrested and imprisoned an *ativāḍī* named Biṣakiṣaṇa who claimed

to be Mahā-Viṣṇu and, in addition to demonstrating mystical powers and threatening to drive out the British, had enticed and polluted several women of respectable families.

Another group deemed by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to be infected by *ativāḍī* mentality were discipular followers of the seventeenth-century Rūpa Kavirāja, a formerly respected Vaiṣṇava who according to standard Gauḍīya accounts began propagating that only renunciants, not householders, are fit to act as *ācāryas,* in clearly derogatory reference to Śrīla Śrīnivāsa Ācārya.[*] Thus Śrīla Śrīnivāsa Ācārya's daughter, Śrīmatī Hemalatā Ṭhākurāṇī, excommunicated Rūpa Kavirāja from accepted Gauḍīya circles by breaking his *tulasī* neckbeads and calling him an *ativāḍī*—in other words, one who deems himself greater than and in a position to override and correct an *ācārya.* Rūpa Kavirāja's other heresies stemmed from his propagating the practice of *rāgānuga-bhakti* in an unregulated and undisciplined manner, purportedly emulating the *gopīs* in disregarding *vidhi*—upholding that it was unnecessary to have a guru, worship *śālagrāma-śīlā* or *tulasī,* or fast on Ekādaśī, and that *rāgānugā-bhakti* could be practiced by *smaraṇa* alone, with no need of *śravaṇa* or *kīrtana.*[†] To defend his position, Rūpa Kavirāja created an elaborate philosophical construct, which became influential enough to attract a detailed refutal by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura and the convening of a council in 1727 in Jaypur specifically to condemn his teachings and adherents.[‡]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī stated that Śukrācārya, the guru of the *asuras,* had taken the form of Rūpa Kavirāja as an act of revenge against Viṣṇu, who in the avatar of Vāmana had humiliated him.[60] By the time of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, Rūpa Kavirāja's followers were a small group confined largely to Vraja-*maṇḍala.* They were known as *sauramya-vādīs,* named after an area of Assam where formerly their sect was popular. Like the *ativāḍīs* of Orissa (with whom they had no affiliation), they wore only one strand of *tulasī* neckbeads.

Gaurāṅga-nāgarīs

Unlike other *apa-sampradāyas, gaurāṅga-nāgarīs,* also known as *nadīyā-nāgarīs* or *gaura-nāgarīs,* identified themselves solely as Vaiṣṇava adherents of Gaura, free from degraded tantric or other influences. Most of them strictly abstained from flesh and fish and wore Vaiṣṇava *tilaka* and *tulasī* neckbeads, and many were reputed as expert *kīrtana* performers. But they were rejected by bona fide devotees for the offense of portraying Gaurāṅga as the *nāgara* of the young women of Nadia, thus disturbing His role in taking the position of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī to taste the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa.

In the transcendental amour of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *nāgara,* the predominating hero and enjoyer, and Śrī Rādhā and Her expansions the *sakhīs* are *nāgarīs,* the predominated heroines to be enjoyed. Although Śrī Gaura is Kṛṣṇa Himself, He adopts the *bhāva* of the *nāgarī* Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī to experience the nature of Her love for Kṛṣṇa. Therefore Śrī Gaurāṅga is not in the *bhāva* of a *nāgara.* The *gaura-nāgarīs* conceived of Śrīman Mahāprabhu as *nāgara* and themselves as *nāgarīs.*

Gaurāṅga-nāgarīs claimed to be followers of Viṣṇupriyā-devī, who they purported to be

Rādhā. They asserted that there is no need to worship Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa—since Lord Caitanya is Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa combined, worship of Him alone is sufficient. But Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī cited the *Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā* description of Viṣṇupriyā-devī as *bhū-śakti,* who being an expansion and maidservant of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī would never attempt to usurp Her position. He further pointed out that no recognized discipular descendant of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu had worshiped Śrī Gaura-Viṣṇupriyā in *madhura-rasa,* and that in contrast to Kṛṣṇa, Lord Caitanya did not have more than one concurrent wife and never entered into conjugal enjoyment with either.[61] Nonetheless, *gaura-nāgarīs* promulgated seamy myths about Lord Caitanya's alleged romances with various fictional girlfriends of whom no mention exists in standard biographies.

In support of their thesis, g*aurāṅga-nāgarīs* would cite the term *gaura-nāgara-vara* from *Śrī Caitanya-candrāmṛta*.[*] Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura contended that g*aurāṅga-nāgarīs* took this stanza out of context from a work that presents a conception of Gaura wholly different from their theory of His being the enjoyer of young girls. Contextually, in this verse the word *nāgara* combined with *gaura* should be understood to mean Kṛṣṇa, as in the compound name Gaura-Kṛṣṇa, thus indicating that Gaura is Kṛṣṇa yet in no way undermining Gaura's specialty in having a different *bhāva.* Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, the revealer of Gaura's *mano-'bhīṣṭa,* had never explained differently than Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī, the most confidential of Lord Caitanya's associates, who was intimately familiar with His inner being and had stated, *rādhā-bhāva-dyuti-suvalitaṁ naumi kṛṣṇa-svarūpam:* "I salute Lord Caitanya, who is Kṛṣṇa adorned with the sentiment and complexion of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī."[62] Thus: "The pretext of declaring Gaurāṅga a *nāgara,* with the intention of converting Him into an object of enjoyment for the *jīva,* is the ultimate limit of perverted intelligence and Hari-*vimukhatā* (indifference to, rejection of, and turning away from the Lord)."[63]

To the *gaurāṅga-nāgarī* contention that because Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the Supreme Lord therefore all types of relationships are possible with Him, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī replied that following in the footsteps of Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara and other Vaiṣṇava luminaries, a true devotee tries to assist the Lord in experiencing the *bhāva* that He wishes to relish, rather than artificially and pompously attempting to thrust upon Him his own contaminated desires for enjoyment. Since pure devotees have no desire separate from the Lord's, their understanding, attitude, and service are propelled by His *svarūpa-Śakti.* Only to this manner of pure devotion does the Lord respond by revealing Himself and all truths about Himself. But *gaurāṅga-nāgarīs* wrongly consider their impure, capricious, speculative desires born of conditioned selfish motives for enjoyment to be devotional, and thus try to create *nāma-rūpa-guṇa-līlā* (names, forms, qualities, and pastimes) of the Supreme Lord according to their whims. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would quote *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* (1.15.30–31):

ataeva yata mahā-mahimā sakale
'gaurāṅga-nāgara' hena stava nāhi bale

yadyapi sakala stava sambhave tāhāne

tathāpiha svabhāva se gāya budha-jane

Therefore great personalities do not offer prayers addressing Lord Gaurāṅga as the enjoyer of damsels. Although all kinds of prayers may be offered to the Supreme Lord, intelligent persons glorify only those characteristics that a particular avatar manifests.

To the claim that Śrī Narahari Sarkār and Śrī Bāsu Ghoṣa, both associates of Lord Caitanya, had composed *kīrtanas* expressing *nāgarī-bhāva,* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura retorted that those songs had been written long after their departure by self-interested persons who ascribed those songs to them.[64] Previously it was common for a devotional poet to credit his compositions to a devotee whom he much admired, yet this system gave scope for broadcasting *apa-siddhanta* in the name of a recognized associate of Lord Caitanya.

On the first day of the Gauḍīya Maṭha's annual festival in Calcutta in 1923, the editor of *Viṣṇupriyā-Gaurāṅga,* the principal magazine of the *gaurāṅga-nāgarīs,* Śrī Haridāsa Goswami, made an unannounced visit to the Gauḍīya Maṭha. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had published several articles in *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* decrying the *gaurāṅga-nāgarī* doctrine as being against the pure devotional *siddhānta* of Gosvāmī literature. Now that a leading proponent of this anomaly had come unsought into his presence, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura wasted no time in candidly exposing the defects of that creed. Some days later Śrī Haridāsa Goswami featured the following comments in his magazine:

Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī is a great scholar of Vaiṣṇava scriptures. For the uplift of Vaiṣṇava literature he has published and disseminated many important works. I was wonderstruck to witness his scholarly intellect and analytic ability, and considered myself fortunate to make his acquaintance. Notwithstanding the difference of opinion between us, his wide-ranging Vaiṣṇava genius is laudable, and we cannot but offer him the respect due a Vaiṣṇava. This tiger of a man is a principal jewel among Vaiṣṇava literati, a radiant star in the Vaiṣṇava firmament.

Despite this acclamation, soon thereafter the *Gauḍīya* ran a scorching analysis of the *nāgarīs'* deviation, especially pinpointing Haridāsa Goswami's flavor:

1. *Gaurāṅga-nāgarīs* imagine themselves to possess the sentiment of the *gopīs* toward Lord Caitanya. They fail to realize that He placed Himself not as Kṛṣṇa the enjoyer, but as an enjoyed devotee of Kṛṣṇa. This mistake falls within the category of *rasābhāsa.* The endeavor of the *gaurāṅga-nāgarīs* to be *gaura-bhogīs* (enjoyers of Gaurāṅga) is ever rejected by authentic Gaura-*bhaktas* (servants of Gaurāṅga).
2. *Gaurāṅga-nāgarīs* accept guruship by seminal succession, which was never the teaching or policy of Śrī Caitanya or His devotees.
3. Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His devotees recognized as Gauḍīyas only those who purely and strictly followed the authorized path; yet Haridāsa Goswami regards all thirteen *apa-sampradāyas* bona fide, and their stultifying notions of devotion as *bhakti.*

In 1926 Śrī Madhusūdana Goswami, an old supporter of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, published an article expressing sympathy for the *gaurāṅga-nāgara* doctrine. The *Gauḍīya* responded with a series of in-depth articles exposing *gaurāṅga-nāgarīs* as:

pauttalika—idol worshipers, for imagining a form and personality of Gaura that is wholly inconsistent with His actual reality;

gaura-bhogī—desirous to illicitly enjoy Gaura rather than serve Him;

bheda-vādī—not appreciating how Kṛṣṇa and Gaura are *acintya-bhedābheda,* thinking that Gaura cannot be Kṛṣṇa unless He also enjoys damsels; hence the *gaurāṅga-nāgarī* differentiation between Kṛṣṇa and Gaura is necessarily mundane;

līlā-vināśī—spoilers of His pastimes by attempting to force Kṛṣṇa's mood as the supreme enjoyer onto Gaura, who deliberately takes a different form to experience a different *bhāva;*

gurvaparādhī—offenders of gurus, for not recognizing the standard explanations of Gaura-*līlā* given by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* thus propagating teachings different from those given by genuine gurus;

rasa-tattvāndha—blind to accurate *śāstrīya* ascertainment of the intricacies of *rasa.*

This series of articles was concluded with one titled "Duḥsaṅga Varjanīya" (Bad association is rejectable).[*]

Neḍās

Neḍā means "shaven-headed." Originally *neḍās* comprised a debased Buddhist sect that had remained intact after other Bengali Buddhists had been reincorporated into Hinduism. According to hearsay, *neḍās* had remained casteless and socially stranded until Śrīla Vīrabhadra Prabhu, the son of Lord Nityānanda, accepted twelve hundred *neḍās* and thirteen hundred *neḍīs* (female *neḍās*) into His fold. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura stated that Śrīla Vīrabhadra Prabhu had allowed the *neḍās* to earn a living by *kīrtana* performances but later they retrograded and remained incorrigibly degenerate.

Sakhī-bhekīs and Cūḍādhārīs

Men of the *sakhī-bhekī* sect dressed and behaved as women, as a concocted *sādhana* meant to erase the sense of maleness and foster the *bhāva* of Vraja-*gopīs*.[*] Gauḍīya theology describes the *gopīs* as maidservants of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in Her pastimes with Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and attainment of a spiritual form as a *gopī* as the topmost spiritual goal. Yet that position is highly esoteric and not easily achieved, and imitation by change of outward dress, as advocated by *sakhī-bhekīs,* was not only ludicrous but outright deviant and misleading. Some *gaurāṅga-nāgarīs* also adopted such pseudo-religious transvestism.

Sakhī-bhekīs attempted to justify themselves on the basis of standard descriptions of Śrīla Gadādhara dāsa Prabhu, an associate of Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Nityānanda Prabhu who would sometimes lose himself in *gopī-bhāva* and call out loudly like a girl of Vraja selling yogurt. But Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura pointed out that such rationalization was invalid, for there was no record of Śrīla Gadādhara dāsa ever dressing as a woman or adopting similar forms of affected femininity. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura also noted that Lord Caitanya externally maintained a male role while internally cultivating a transcendental female identity, whereas false devotees in male bodies who externally appear as women, nevertheless internally maintain a masculine mindset.

Taking Kṛṣṇa's role in farcical "*rāsa-līlā*" with *sakhī-bhekīs, cūḍādhārīs* would dress with a peacock feather crown (*cūḍā*).

Summary

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura summarized his assessment of *apa-sampradāyas:*

> In modern times Kali Mahārāja, the personification of the present corrupted age, has assumed the false dress of a devotee of Śrī Gaura. Sometimes he adopts the name *sahajiyā,* or the name of an imitative cult such as *āula, bāula, neḍā,* or *neḍī.* With great intensity he propagates these false philosophies, as well as others opposed to the path of *bhakti,* such as Māyāvāda and *gaura-nāgarī.* Just see the influence of Kali Mahārāja! Some say, "I am Gaurahari Himself," some declare themselves exalted spiritual masters, some announce themselves as the creator, and others claim they are Lord Śiva. They enthusiastically cheat human society by propagating bogus doctrines taught by Kali Mahārāja. Pleased with their preaching, he blesses them and bestows upon them abundant wealth, women, and fame. Benumbed by their propaganda, the majority of people ignore *śuddha-bhakti* and instead advance along the course of these new depraved philosophies grounded in material enjoyment. They become so intoxicated in this mundane pleasure as to be completely unaware of their ascending the peak of thorough self-destruction.[65]

Considering the credence accorded to old religious texts, yet the non-existence of literary evidence to justify the existence of most *apa-sampradāyas,* many deviant Vaiṣṇavas discovered the simple expedient of composing counterfeit *śāstras.* In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, varieties of Bengali books were deliberately forged and circulated to mendaciously lend credence to the groundless assertations of diverse *apa-sampradāyas,* with the calculation that once put into writing, even outlandish fabulations would likely become accepted as factual.[*] These were mainly pseudo-historical works based on recognized medieval biographies but with shrewdly inserted *apa-siddhāntas* and distortions of fact. Pecuniary motivation spurred the widespread dissemination of such apocrypha, particularly among the less-educated rural masses. Especially popular were the multiple low-cost editions, known as *baṭatolā,* from the Beṇī-mādhava De Publishing House, which between 1815 and 1899 issued more than fifty of these works, lending credulity to the rancid misconceptions,

misinterpretations, and outright falsehoods of *sahajiyā* Vaiṣṇavism.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī echoed many contemporary scholars in rebuffing as philosophically or historically inaccurate, or as outright forgeries, certain factoidal books considered important by many Vaiṣṇavas. He wrote in his introduction to *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta:*

> There are several other recent books, or books written after *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* such as Jayānanda's *Caitanya-maṅgala,* the *kaḍacā* (notebook) ascribed to one Govinda dāsa, *Vaṁśī-śikṣā, Advaita-prakāśa,* and *Nityānanda-vaṁśa-vistāra.* Although they are said to be old, we have no interest in them, because of their contrariness to *tattva* and *siddhānta,* their attempt to impose ill-motivated narrow-mindedness, their lack of any proper teaching, and other such faults. Being aware of this, one should accept *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* as the original book, and no one should recognize these *apa-granthas* (bogus scriptures).

Other examples of books that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura discounted as *apa-granthas* were *Advaita-maṅgala, Muralī-vilāsa,* Lāl dāsa's *Bhaktamāl,* and Bhakta dāsa Bāula's *Vivarta-vilāsa.* He likewise spurned the recent and widely popular *Amiya-nimāi-carita* by "Mahatma" Śiśira Kumāra Ghoṣa, which described Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's pastimes yet was ontologically deficient. And he commented in print that Ghoṣa's abridged but similarly perfervid English rendition of the same, titled *Lord Gouranga, or Salvation for All* (1897), was an unauthorized version meant for mawkish enjoyment.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura repeatedly warned that the varied modes of worship adopted by *apa-sampradāyas* were polluted by explicit or implicit desires for personal emolument and thus fell far short of the standard of pure devotion, which is executed solely for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure and characterized by absence of even a vestige of selfish desire. The purported *bhakti* of such deviant Vaiṣṇavas was deceitful, being performed for their own gross, subtle, or supposedly spiritual enjoyment. For instance, their service to holy *dhāmas* or places they claimed as *dhāmas* was merely to facilitate huckstery, self-promotion, and money-grubbing. Bogus disciples accepted bogus gurus primarily to obtain social recognition and dubious blessings ultimately meant for sense gratification. Instead of instructing his followers in their actual duty —to serve the senses of the Lord—the cheating guru would engage them in pleasing his own senses.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī emphasized that anyone who neglects the actual process as delineated by *śāstra* and realized *ācāryas* for approaching the Lord and invents a new method for worshiping Kṛṣṇa or Caitanya Mahāprabhu is certainly outside the path of *śuddha-bhakti.* He waged a lifelong campaign against the *apa-sampradāyas,* declaring their irregularities not only nondevotional but anti-devotional, for by meddling with and mutilating the real teachings of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, these devious poseurs were misdirecting people and depriving them of true *bhakti*. As Dr. Kālīdāsa Nāga later proclaimed in a public forum, "Kali's mission was to kill the entire world while the essential meaning of Lord Caitanya's message was kept locked up in a cage."[*] Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī quoted Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī on how such

concoctions blocked the true devotional path:

> *Śruti-smṛti-purāṇādi- pañcarātra-vidhiṁ vinā*
> *aikāntikī harer bhaktir utpātāyaiva kalpate*
>
> Hari-*bhakti,* even if apparently pure and exclusive, actually portends serious misfortune if executed with disregard for the injunctions of *Śruti, smṛti, Purāṇa, Pañcarātra,* and other *śāstras.* (Brs 1.2.101)

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura asserted that the egregious conduct and flagrant malinterpretations of *śāstra* by adherents of *apa-sampradāyas* were not at all acceptable within Vaiṣṇava dharma, that persons who smoke or chew tobacco, drink liquor, luxuriate in illicit sex, or eat flesh cannot properly be called Vaiṣṇavas, even if they chant the holy names and wear *tilaka,* are nominally initiated, or even theoretically give initiation by claiming descent from Lord Nityānanda or other impeccable devotees, and that there cannot be any auspiciousness for the world unless such rascaldom is uprooted by sadhus of truly ideal character. He rejected even those *bābājīs* and others who (although themselves committed to spiritual practices and not arrantly depraved) by failing to clearly distinguish and dissociate themselves from the rakes, lent credence to them by the logic of *maunaṁ sammati-lakṣaṇam:* "Silence implies consent."

A typical rebuttal by representatives of *apa-sampradāyas* was to portray Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, rather than their own ilk, as heterodox, alleging that his "oppressive restrictions" and stressing of vigorous preaching rather than esoteric cultivation of *rāgānuga-bhakti* was a sacrilegious break with a long-standing and respected tradition. Yet Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura diagnosed the prevalent Gauḍīya culture as a factitious and stagnant agglomerate far deviated from the pristine principles of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu—and in need of extensive reform.

Eleven

Other Deviant Genres

Māyāvādīs

> A Māyāvādī is one who mistakenly believes that *māyā* affects the Supreme Lord, His *dhāma,* His devotee, or the process of *bhakti,* although each of them is transcendental to *māyā*.[1]

Despite his condemnation of *prākṛta-sahajiyās,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī rated them better than Māyāvādīs. At least *prākṛta-sahajiyās* accept Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Lord and the proper object of love, whereas despite some pretensions to theism, Māyāvādīs are hopelessly atheistic; and whereas the showy antics of *prākṛta-sahajiyās* might indicate at least a semblance of devotion, the phlegmatic detachment of Māyāvādīs is eerily vapid. Māyāvāda, the ancient enemy of *śuddha-bhakti,* is the greatest offense, because it attempts to desacralize the infinite Supreme Lord by equating the infinitesimal *jīva* with Him. Māyāvāda promises the impossible, by advocating the merging of the soul into a state of virtual nonexistence, tantamount to eradicating the very life of *bhakti,* namely *sevya-sevaka-bhāva* (the attitude that Kṛṣṇa is the master and the *jīva* His servant), and is therefore is the path of utmost inauspiciousness.[2]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura explained that although Māyāvādīs appear to be spiritualists, their renunciation is not actuated by the valid spiritual principle of selfless service to Kṛṣṇa. Instead, they selfishly deny Kṛṣṇa's overlordship and, more ambitiously and insidiously even than do gross materialists, desire to preempt His position. Notwithstanding their apparent expressions of devotion, Māyāvādīs harbor malice toward Kṛṣṇa. Hence Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura declared, "The prayers of impersonalists offend the Lord more than the denunciations of His avowed enemies."[3] Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura clarified that the much esteemed renunciation of impersonalists is not a symptom of genuine spiritual advancement, but is born of their frustration in trying to enjoy the material world. He further elucidated that *bhoga* (the overt exploitive spirit of the *karmīs*) and *tyāga* (the renunciation of the impersonalists) are both maladjustments and that true dharma entails the proper adjustment of selflessness in service to Bhagavān. And while Māyāvādīs pride themselves on being *jñānīs* (many indeed being deeply learned in *Śāstra*), Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would refer to their "poor fund of knowledge" for ignorantly concluding that the Supreme is devoid of name, qualities, form, and activities.

Even in youth Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī had made an elaborate study of Māyāvāda for the sake of overmastering it. He had perused both Māyāvāda literature and Vaiṣṇava refutations thereof. He followed Mahāprabhu in giving natural expositions of Vedic texts to undermine Māyāvāda malinterpretations. For instance, he pointed out that the explanation of the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* maxim *ahaṁ brahmāsmi* (I am Brahman, spirit) to mean "I am the Supreme" is *ajña-rūḍhi,* based on the fallacy of homogeneity of spirit—the *vidvad-rūḍhi* being "I am a spiritual entity," for *brahma* can indicate either the Supreme Spirit or the infinitesimal spirit, and for a *jīva* to declare himself the Supreme is simply wishful thinking, because plainly he is not.

Due to Māyāvāda misconceptions, many people found Caitanya Mahāprabhu's teaching of *tṛṇād api sunīcatā* incongruent with *ahaṁ brahmāsmi,* as the Supreme need not be humble.

Yet Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī explained *tṛṇād api sunīcatā* as the only true import of *ahaṁ brahmāsmi,* for the dharma of the *jīva* is to constantly chant in all humility the holy names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, accepting His paramountcy. *Ahaṁ brahmāsmi* is one of the four Upaniṣadic aphorisms that Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya declared as principal *mahā-vākyas* (great sayings), claiming that the misinterpretations he lent them are the essence of Vedic philosophy. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī explicated how the purport of each of these supposed *mahā-vākyas* is subsumed within the *tṛṇād api sunīcena* verse, which he identified as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *mahā-vākya.*[*] *Ahaṁ brahmāsmi* corresponds to *tṛṇād api sunīcena* and *amānī.*[†] *Tat tvam asi* corresponds to *taror iva sahiṣṇunā* and *mānada, prajñānamānandaṁ brahma* to *kīrtanīyaḥ,* and *ekam evādvitīyam* to *hari.*[4] [‡] The inner meaning of the *Śruti* statement *ekam evādvitīyam* is that *advaya-jñāna* Kṛṣṇa is Vrajendra-nandana in Vraja.[5] Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī further elaborated that impersonal explications of Vedic statements were like seeing in two dimensions, whereas the Vaiṣṇava perception gives complete vision, in three dimensions and beyond.[6]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura untiringly opposed Māyāvāda, often stating that as long as it continues it will create obstacles to the path of *śuddha-bhakti.* He declared that not a single spot should remain on earth where Māyāvāda can find shelter. This was indeed a valiant battlecry, for notwithstanding its multiple inherent absurdities, Māyāvāda had become nigh ubiquitous, being inextricably braided with *smārta* doctrine and also having insidiously infiltrated most other *sampradāyas,* even the ostensibly devotional.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura exposed the bid to relate directly to Kṛṣṇa, instead of becoming the servant of His servants, as covered impersonalism, a strain of *ahaṅgrahopāsanā.* Although this aberrant process is usually focused on the Supreme Lord, it is even more baleful when the worshiper indirectly attempts to usurp the position of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī or others. Regarding the Brahmo Samājī prayer *nirākāra tomāra caraṇa dekhi* ("O formless, I see your feet"), referring to Bhagavān, whom they objectified as *nirākāra* (without form), Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura pointed out the essential defect: "If there is no *ākāra* (form), how can you see His feet?" He further analyzed how by proposing to annul the differing *viśeṣas* (specialties) of Kṛṣṇa-*līlā* and Gaura-*līlā, gaurāṅga-nāgarīs* became *nirviśeṣa-vādīs* (voidists akin to Buddhists).

During a train journey Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura related the following anecdote to his disciples: A *brahma-upāsaka* (worshiper of the undifferentiated impersonal Brahman), unable to recover a loan, sued his debtor, who in court argued, "Since both you and I are Brahman, what is the difference? The money is still with Brahman."

Rāmānandīs

Rāmānandīs, or the Rāmāyet *sampradāya,* were followers of a sadhu named Rāmānanda, who in the period just prior to Mahāprabhu broke from the orthodox Śrī *sampradāya* and propagated a popularistic form of Rāma-*bhakti* that had immeasurably influenced the culture of the vast Hindi-speaking belt of North India. But Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī viewed their devotion as contaminated with Māyāvāda, for they considered Lord Rāma a product of the impersonal absolute, merging into which was their ultimate goal. Rāmānandī culture was anchored in *Rāma-carita-mānasa,* the Hindi rendering of *Rāmāyaṇa* by Tulsīdāsa that was daily recited by millions. But Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī stated that Tulsīdāsa could not have been a pure Vaiṣṇava because he had claimed to be a descendant of Bhṛgu Muni—which no Vaiṣṇava would be proud of, Bhṛgu having once kicked Lord Viṣṇu in the chest.[7] When Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was invited to a Rāma temple in Purī, a Rāmānandī sadhu residing there declared Rāma to have been more ethical and moral than Kṛṣṇa and therefore superior to Him. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī countered by establishing Kṛṣṇa as the *avatārī* (source of all other avatars) and the supremely independent transcendental enjoyer. By questioning and probing, he revealed that the sadhu's understanding was contaminated with Māyāvāda.

Śāktas

Śāktas worshiped *śakti* (the material energy), personified as the goddess Durgā, accepting her as primordial and supreme. Worship of *śakti* in her various aspects was a major cult within Hinduism, at the lower end encompassing worship of village deities and nature spirits (those of trees, rocks, rivers, and so forth). In Bengal, worship of Durgā's ghastly form of Kālī was so widespread that it was said, *jekhane bāṅgālī, śekhane kālī-bāḍi:* "Wherever there is a Bengali, there is also a Kālī temple." Most *śāktas* supplicated the goddess for the worldly boons she conferred, a common prayer being *dhanaṁ dehi janaṁ dehi yaśo dehi:* "Give me wealth, followers, and fame." The Bengali Hindu population was divided nearly equally between *śāktas* and Vaiṣṇavas, *śāktas* predominating in most of West Bengal, Vaiṣṇavas more numerous in East Bengal.*

The *śāktas'* goal of worldly enjoyment rendered them, like *smārtas,* unabashedly materialistic. Well-to-do *śāktas* were disposed toward overt displays of religiosity, celebrating the annual festivals of Durgā-*pūjā* and Kālī-*pūjā* in an extraordinarily grandiose manner. These were occasions for *bali-dāna,* which Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī opposed as an unnecessary and *adharmika* act of violence. Although particularly gross, *bali-dāna* was but one instance of the traditional contrariety between *śāktas* and Vaiṣṇavas that extended throughout all areas of their respective doctrines and practices.

Another instance was *śākta* de-emphasis of the importance of *śāstra,* with subjective religious experience considered sacred and not requiring gauging by *śāstrīya* parameters. Accordingly, personal *sādhana* and the role of one's guru were deemed independent of scriptural directive. This accomodating outlook, not unique to but prominent in the *śakti* cult, naturally gave rise to much innovativeness—almost anything could pass under a religious coating—and hence eviscerated the whole rationale of receiving absolute knowledge through the checks-and-balances system of *sādhu-śāstra-guru,* and admitted unbridled speculation in the name of spirituality.

Referring to those generally known as *śāktas* as *viddha* (contaminated) *śāktas,* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura upheld the Gauḍīya position that only a Vaiṣṇava is a real *śākta,* a *śuddha-śākta*, because he knows Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī as the *ādya-śakti* (primordial energy) of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is *sarva-śaktimān* (the possessor of all energies). At its highest level Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism stresses worship of Rādhā even over that of Kṛṣṇa, which is why Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura defined Gauḍīya as a worshiper of Rādhā.*

Ramakrishna Mission

Bengalis in general, and Bengali *śāktas* in particular, were much enamored by Swami Vivekananda and his Ramakrishna Mission, which spliced the worship of Kālī with a rehash of Māyāvāda that much diluted and mutilated the standards set by Ādi-Śaṅkarācārya, who had taught and demonstrated ideal brahminical behaviour, propounded arguments against materialistic views, and established an extremely high caliber of erudition and asceticism.[8] The mission promoted mundane welfare work as religious activity, mouthing Vivekananda's oxymoronic *daridra-nārāyaṇa-sevā* and thus claiming, "Service to man is service to God." Additionally, based on Vivekananda's repeated exhortation to take flesh food, the mission allowed even its purported sannyasis to eat meat.[†] Such broadmindedness had been initiated by Ramakrishna, whose eclecticism had led him while dabbling in Islam to perform that act considered by Hindus as unpardonably sacrilegious: eating beef. And while practicing tantric *sādhana,* he had ingested human flesh.

Although Ramakrishna alleged to have transcended all religious boundaries, his orientation was clearly *śākta,* under whose influence he emphasized the experiential over the guidelines of *śāstra.* His best-known catchphrase—*yata mata tata patha:* "As many opinions, that many ways" (interpreted to mean "All paths lead to the same goal")—had become etched into the Bengali psyche and was widely lauded as the acme of religious thought. Yet it was in direct contradiction to Lord Kṛṣṇa's teaching in the *Gītā* (18.66) that He alone is to be surrendered to. On the basis of Ramakrishna's teachings, the mission propounded that worship of any demigod will take one to the supreme goal (perceived to be a fusion of the worshiped and the worshiper), and influenced numerous Bengalis to develop a taste for eating flesh and presuming themselves one with God—thus severely hampering spiritual culture in Bengal.[9] In confliction the *Gauḍīya* boomed:

> The modern populist and widely respected theory *yata mata tata patha* is fully opposed by the preacher of the genuine truth of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*—the Gauḍīya Maṭha—which through innumerable fearless and objective arguments declares war meant to cause a revolution in the mindset of the whole world apathetic to Kṛṣṇa.[10]

Ramakrishna, popularly known as "Paramahaṁsa" and famed for his frequent and much-lauded trances, visions, and other displays of ecstasy, was widely considered a *bhakta* due to his professed devotion centered on, but not restricted to, Kālī; he also claimed to see God as Kṛṣṇa, Gaura-Nitāi, Śiva, and indeed as every being and object in existence. Nonetheless, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī considered him a Māyāvādī for equating worship of demigods with that of Viṣṇu and for promoting himself as Bhagavān. Notwithstanding the seeming sublimity of Ramakrishna's devotion, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī rejected it as necessarily false due to its mistaken and indeed antithetical basis. Because the spiritual position of every *jīva,* eternally and without exception, is servant of Kṛṣṇa and no other, Ramakrishna's differing representation of *bhakti* was not (as was claimed by his supporters) the ultimate limit of devotion, but a severe misrepresentation of it.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī once described how Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had been asked to test Ramakrishna: A Mr. Nṛsiṁha Datta, upon meeting his bosom friend Śrīla Bhaktivinoda, confided, "We know only Mahāprabhu, yet my son is associating with a Māyāvādī, this human whom he glorifies as a new avatar, a new Mahāprabhu. Please grace my house to assess if this person is real or an imposter. I will accept your verdict." N. Datta brought Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura to his home on a day that Ramakrishna had also been invited, and when the Ṭhākura arrived, N. Datta informed Ramakrishna, "My friend, an exalted Vaiṣṇava who is the very life of Mahāprabhu has come." Seeing Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Ramakrishna began singing *yā're dekhile nayana jhure tā'rā du'bhāi eseche re* (Those two brothers have come, upon seeing whom, one cries), and then collapsed as if unconscious.[*] Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was in another room, adjacent to the veranda that Ramakrishna was lying on. A few moments later *rasagullās* were brought to Ramakrishna. After hesitating slightly, he ate some, and others took the remnants—but no one dared offer any to Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. A little later an untouchable item was brought.[†] At first Ramakrishna refused, but then took a morsel.

Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had been teaching *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* at the Viśva-Vaiṣṇava Sabhā. Returning there, he proved the falsity of Ramakrishna's theatricals, and of the whole impersonalist school, by citing statements of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* that categorically distinguished *pratibimba-ratyābhāsa, chāyā-ratyābhāsa,* and so on, from the symptoms of genuine *prema*.[‡]

Ramakrishna was widely lauded for having related to his wife as mother, which supposedly demonstrated his transcendence of sex desire; yet Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura revealed that actually Ramakrishna had become impotent due to a plethora of premarital contacts.[11] And Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura deemed that Ramakrishna's posthumous election to avatarhood (which Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura called apotheosis) illustrated the ignorance and canker of contemporary Hindu society.

After Ramakrishna's death, a disciple of his once came to meet Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, and during conversation asked him if it was true that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had met Ramakrishna. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī confirmed it, and further commented that various *apa-sampradāyas* had tampered with the pristine teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, so therefore the Gauḍīya Maṭha had been established to drive out such misconceptions and preach His message correctly.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was a distant relative of Swami Vivekananda, both hailing from the Hāṭkholā branch of the Datta family.

The disciples of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, many of whom had previously shared most young Bengalis' deep admiration of Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, and their mission, soon imbibed Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's odium for everything that those personalities stood for. While preaching in Khulna, Śrīmat Śrīdhara Mahārāja told a prominent member of that mission, "Your society may have big signboards advertising its beneficial services to the public, but if an auditor were to go

there it would be proven bankrupt. Your bombastic propaganda is clearly a hoax, for you have no real wealth to distribute to the people, only misleading Māyāvāda philosophy." When informed of this encounter, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was pleased, and praised the appropriateness of the example.

At a public meeting in Sylhet, Siddha-svarūpa Brahmacārī alienated the entire town by declaring Vivekananda to be a rowdy, Ramakrishna crazy, and his wife (the "Divine Mother") a prostitute. Not surprisingly, the gathering became apoplectic and rushed forward to attack Siddha-svarūpa and his accompanying colleagues—who hastily exited. That very night some local people distributed handbills decrying the Gauḍīya Maṭha. Although that day had been the first of a planned three-day meeting, in fear of reprisal the convener persuaded Śrīmat Śrīdhara Mahārāja, head of the party, to cancel forthcoming programs. But the next morning another member of the unit, Hayagrīva Brahmacārī, approached the district judge and, by assuring him that Siddha-svarūpa Brahmacārī would not speak, had the function restored.

That evening an incensed unprecedentedly large crowd attended, wanting nothing less than an unequivocal apology. Yet Śrīmat Śrīdhara Mahārāja was impenitent: "We are peons of Śrīla Vyāsadeva and all the *ācāryas*. We simply repeat their teachings. If you want to complain then complain to them. We did not come with a veil to cover our heads.[*] If anyone can defeat our message we will accept his line of thought, but if you cannot defeat us then you should submit to the Gauḍīya line. Compared to so many great philosophers in history—Śaṅkarācārya, Gautama, Kaṇāda, Patañjali, Jaimini—this Vivekananda is merely a midget." By thus reiterating the same points in a more philosophical and less inflammatory manner, Śrīmat Śrīdhara Mahārāja convinced the townsfolk, who applauded and extended the program to fifteen days. It was a major victory for the Gauḍīya Maṭha.

Tantrics

While tantra may refer to many forms of practices of conventional Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain sects, it was identified particularly with the *vāmya* (left wing) tantrism, akin to various strains of black magic clandestinely practiced worldwide in virtually all societies since time immemorial. Throughout India, *vāmya* tantrism was a strand of the *śākta* cult. It was deliberately and delightedly vulgar, far beyond all normal civilized limits, yet simultaneously secretive, mystical, and esoteric.

Practitioners aspired either for *mokṣa* or attainment of mystic power by such degraded practices as a man performing sex with a woman other than his wife, considering himself *puruṣa* (the primeval enjoyer) and her *prakṛti* (Śakti conceived of as primeval nature). A particularly lurid tantric *sādhana* was *pañca-makāra* (the five *m's*)—sex with *mahilā* (woman), and ingestion of *māṁsa* (meat), *matsya* (fish), *mada* (wine), and *mala-mūtra* (excrement and urine)—all accompanied by fiendish rituals, with the stated objective to control and sublimate *kāma* (material desire). The perfectional stage, hypothetically leading to *mokṣa,* was to perform these procedures with neither relish nor disgust, and in the case of sex, without ejaculation. Tantric rites incorporated extremes of human debasement, including intake of stool, urine, semen, mucous, and vaginal and menstrual fluids, and intercourse with one's mother; ritualized necrophilia was considered the ultimate *sādhana.* Apart from those tantrics who undertook such gruesome *sādhana* in pursuit of its purported *sādhya,* others had coarser motives, and tantrics were feared for their nexus with lower spirits and the preternatural influence they could exercise upon others.

Tantrism was not an organized sect; tantrics were few and mostly of low-class background. Nevertheless, tantrism had considerably influenced various lower-level Hindu subsects and also mainstream *śakti* worship.

Buddhists

In May 1925 two well-educated Buddhist monks, one Nepali and one Ceylonese, were sent by their *ācārya* to Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha to present a plea to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. The ancient Mahābodhi (Buddha) temple at Bodh Gayā was being run by Śaivas, who considered Lord Buddha an avatar of Viṣṇu and thus were applying Vaiṣṇava *tilaka* on the deity's forehead; they were also sacrificing goats to the deity.* Both of these acts being highly objectionable to Buddhists, the two monks sought Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's backing for upholding their claim that Lord Buddha's temple be given over to Buddhists. In 1891 their *ācārya* had several times approached the young Siddhānta Sarasvatī in Calcutta to hear from him about Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma, so they were hopeful of gaining his support. Prior to their visit, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had received some leaflets sent by a Hindu professor of Patna University seeking endorsement for just the opposite, that worship at the Mahābodhi shrine continue in Hindu hands as it had for centuries. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura explained his position to the monks:

> Certainly Buddhadeva is recognized as an avatar of Viṣṇu, as is clear from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.3.24). Vaiṣṇavas respect Lord Buddha, yet with a different understanding than the Buddhists', knowing that his teaching is atheistic and therefore to be rejected. Vaiṣṇavas actually adhere to the nonviolence that is the supposed cornerstone of Buddhism—*ahiṁsā paramo dharmah:* "Nonviolence is the supreme religion"—but which Buddhists merely pay lip service to. Buddhism is itself violence, for its nihilism is spiritual suicide. It is common knowledge that most Buddhists eat meat on the plea that they do not personally kill animals and thus don't contradict the principle of nonviolence. Hence they are Buddhists in name only, for they do not observe the teachings of the Buddha. Yet so-called violence or nonviolence on the material platform is ultimately meaningless, for unless a person takes to *śuddha-bhakti,* he must partake in sundry forms of exploitation and envy toward others. If worship in the Mahābodhi temple were entrusted to a Vaiṣṇava *brāhmaṇa* conversant with these *siddhāntas,* then and only then would Lord Buddha be properly respected, and the grisly performance of animal sacrifice there be stopped.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī then asked the monks if they believed the deity to actually be Buddha, or different from him. "We accept the deity as an emblem of Buddha," they replied. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī then explained the futility of that conception and also outlined various strains of Buddhism, kindred impersonalist theories, and refutations of both according to Vaiṣṇava *siddhānta*.[12]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura analyzed that the respect Buddhism commands is due to its promoting moralism in a world tending toward immorality, yet Buddhism is on the mental, not spiritual, platform.*

Twelve

Further Contentious Issues

Nāmāparādha

From every quarter of Bengal the rhythmic choruses of *kīrtana* resounded, accompanied by the clangor of *khol* and *karatālas,* uplifted hands, swaying bodies, and intermittent whooping. Even young lads could quote the universally known *harer nāma* verse:

> *harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam*
> *kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā*
>
> In this age of quarrel and hypocrisy the only means of deliverance is chanting the holy name of the Lord. There is no other way. There is no other way. There is no other way.[1]

Yet chanting was mostly undertaken not for the sublime purpose introduced by Caitanya Mahāprabhu—to cultivate an attitude of selfless loving service to Kṛṣṇa—but to gain piety for achieving material gain or for removing obstacles to sensual happiness and worldly comfort. Widespread faith in the holy names had led to their being invoked aberrantly as mystic deterrents to epidemics or to hasten the advent of overdue rain. And especially, since *harināma* eradicates all reactions to sins, *kīrtana* mitigated people's fear of Yamarāja—and thus arose the pernicious yet persistent misconception that those who chanted the holy names need not observe common morality.

Apa-sampradāya adherents were fond of quoting verses like:

> *prabhu kahe, "yāṅra mukhe śuni eka-bāra*
> *kṛṣṇa-nāma, sei pūjya, śreṣṭha sabākāra"*
>
> Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, "Whoever chants just once the holy name of Kṛṣṇa is worshipable and best in human society."
>
> *eka kṛṣṇa-nāme kare sarva-pāpa kṣaya*
> *nava-vidhā bhakti pūrṇa nāma haite haya*
>
> Simply by once chanting Kṛṣṇa-*nāma,* a person is relieved from all sinful reactions. One can complete the nine processes of *bhakti* simply by chanting the holy name. (Cc 2.15.106–7)

They seemingly willfully misapplied such texts to equate *śuddha-nāma* with *nāmāparādha,* and to liken pure devotees to deviants who took *harināma* as a license for committing sin, under the notion that chanting would absolve them of due karmic returns. Yet this was quite contrary to the actual teachings of Śrī Caitanya, who had introduced a process meant not to facilitate perpetual sinning, but for becoming eternally free from sin. *Śāstrīya* statements that the holy name can deliver one from all sinful reactions are meant not to encourage chanters to continue sinning, but to indicate that a sincere chanter, being personally protected by the Lord, need not undergo other means of atonement. Thus when Lord Caitanya redeemed the

otherwise incorrigible hoodlums Jagāi and Mādhāi, He did so with the proviso that they permanently forswear all sinful activities, because among the ten *nāmāparādhas* described in *Padma Purāṇa,* to act sinfully on the strength of chanting is so grievous that, far from freeing one from sinful reaction, it renders the chanter unable to be purified even by hellish punishment.[*] While discussing the need to forswear *asat-saṅga,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī noted that Lord Caitanya had underlined this principle by disowning the sweet-voiced *kīrtanīyā* Choṭa Haridāsa, thus making it clear that persons lacking good character cannot utter the holy name.[2]

Seminal Gauḍīya texts, especially *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and *Ṣaṭ-sandarbha,* extensively discuss *nāmāparādha,* explaining that chanting with any motive other than to develop unalloyed love of Kṛṣṇa is certain to engender *aparādha.* Yet leaders of *apa-sampradāyas* being loath to broach these topics, the very term *nāmāparādha* was virtually unknown until Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura enunciated the difference between offensive and pure chanting. So although Bengal reverberated with the names Kṛṣṇa, Rāma, and Hari, no one was becoming purified by that offense-ridden chanting. Contrarily, the sinful propensities of such offensive chanters often exceeded that of persons with no claim to piety. Hence Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura ruefully referred to *prākṛta-sahajiyās'* chanting as being like that of parrots or a gramophone.[3]

> Can *kīrtana* really be considered genuine if some worthless people without any ardor for Hari-*sevā* come together and howl? True Hari-*saṅkīrtana* is that of genuine devotees, who serve Hari according to the principles enjoined in the Vedas and allied *śāstras. Kīrtana* is not Hari-*saṅkīrtana* if conducted for the prevention of cholera or pox epidemics, for prosperity in trade, or for *lābha-pūjā-pratiṣṭhā.* Such *kīrtana* is *māyā-kīrtana.*
>
> As long as we remain aloof from *kīrtana* conducted by those who hold perfect Kṛṣṇa-*kīrtana, māyā* will delude us in various ways. We will derive no benefit by joining the *kīrtana* of persons not anxious for their own wellbeing, who hoodwink themselves. There will be no *saṅkīrtana* if we follow such people who, without receiving instructions from true Vaiṣṇavas, imitatively decorate their body with beads and *tilaka* and screech out some names that merely resemble *harināma.*[4]
>
> The holy name is never revealed to one in the bodily conception of life, who thinks in terms of "I" and "mine."[5]
>
> Making a pretense of *harināma,* people are waltzing their way to hell.[6]

Nevertheless, most putative Vaiṣṇavas were unaware of their wrongdoing and were astonished by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's exposī of it. They had been raised with the misconception that Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Nityānanda Prabhu were so merciful and the holy name so powerful that devotees are automatically exempt from scriptural injunctions delineating moral codes and gradual spiritual upliftment. On hearing him describe *nāmāparādhas,* surprised listeners would wonder why they had never previously received these important instructions, whereupon Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would clarify that it was the duty of a guru not only

to give the name of Kṛṣṇa to his disciple, but to inform him of and instruct him to stop committing the ten *nāmāparādhas:*

> Without taking shelter at the lotus feet of *śrī*-guru there is no *harināma.* Not knowing the difference between *nāma* and *nāmāparādha,* many persons accept mud instead of milk. Thus it is absolutely essential to know the right object of worship. Why we should perform *bhajana,* which *bhajana* we should do—understanding this is called initiation from *śrī-gurudeva. Dīkṣā* is the pastime of imparting *sambandha-jñāna.*[7]

He would quote *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (1.8.16) as evidence that *nāmāparādha* counteracts the very purpose of chanting:

> *bahu janma kare yadi śravaṇa, kīrtana*
> *tabu ta' nā pāya kṛṣṇa-pade prema-dhana*
>
> If one is infested with the ten offenses in chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra,* despite his endeavor to chant the holy name throughout repeated births, he will not achieve love of Godhead, the ultimate goal of this chanting.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's conclusion was that a pseudo-guru who teaches only about the holy name's power of absolution simply deludes his supposed disciples. Without training his disciples in *sambandha-jñāna,* and by failing to instruct them to avoid *nāmāparādha,* their recitation of *nāma* could not progress beyond *nāmābhāsa,* which can never give rise to *prema.* Thus everything said by such a cheater in the dress of a guru is *nāmāparādha.*

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī also clarified the import of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* 1.8.24 and 1.8.31, which reveal that Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Lord Nityānanda are so merciful that Their names may be chanted without fear of committing offense:

> '*kṛṣṇa-nāma' kare aparādhera vicāra*
> *kṛṣṇa balile aparādhīra nā haya vikāra*
>
> *caitanya-nityānande nāhi e-saba vicāra*
> *nāma laite prema dena, vahe aśrudhāra*
>
> In chanting Kṛṣṇa-*nāma* there is consideration of offense; an offender does not become transformed simply by chanting Kṛṣṇa-*nāma.* But there are no such stipulations regarding the holy names of Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda. Simply chanting them awards love of God, and tears flow from the eyes.

He explained that these verses do not supply a blanket proviso for sinfully chanting Gaura-*nāma:*

> A person infested with offenses cannot chant the transcendental name of Kṛṣṇa. Even

millions of lives spent chanting *nāmāparādha* will not give Kṛṣṇa-*prema.* But there is no consideration of offense in chanting the names of Gaura and Nityānanda. If a *jīva* infested with *anarthas* chants the names of Gaura and Nityānanda, recognizing Them as the Supreme Personalities of Godhead, then his *anarthas* are cleared off. But if the names of Gaura and Nityānanda are chanted in a spirit of enjoyment, thinking that Gaura and Nityānanda are meant for filling my belly, or that I will be honored as a devotee by chanting Their names, or that Their names are to be enjoyed by my senses according to my speculation, then vocal utterance of "Gaura! Gaura!" will not be Gaura-*nāma kīrtana,* but an illusory name intended for supplying fuel for sense gratification. There was a gang that used to perform dacoity while calling out "Prāṇa Gaura-Nityānanda! Prāṇa Gaura-Nityānanda!"—but that is not actual chanting of the names of Gaura and Nityānanda.[8] [*]

In the initial days of the Mission, Śrī Jagadīśa Bhakti Pradīpa told the young son of Śrī Śrīśa Rāya Chaudhuri that all apparent bestowal of the holy name by persons who for material remuneration confer initiation or recite *Bhāgavatam* is simply *nāmāparādha*.[†] Some days later a tearful Śrīśa Babu reported this to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and appealed, "My guru accepts money; is he not a true guru?" In reply, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī presented much *śāstrīya* evidence for distinguishing a genuine guru from cheaters; yet Śrīśa Babu left unsatisfied and gradually distanced himself from the Mission.

After a public program in Jajpur District, whereat Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had spoken about the ten offenses against the holy name, the maharaja of that area objected that since the Lord's name is pure it can be chanted in any manner without question of *aparādha;* and the many sadhus present there abetted his claim. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura told the doubting monarch, "I will show you how this is true." He asked the sadhus to remain throughout the entire second session of that function, scheduled for the next evening. "We will be having *saṅkīrtana* and Hari-*kathā,* so you should not leave," he said. Those sadhus came, but the majority left early, being habituated to smoking ganja and tobacco or taking tea at that time. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura then pointed out, "Because of their addictions they cannot stay for *saṅkīrtana.* Is this not due to their offenses?" The maharaja understood. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura then told him that Kali resides where there is meat-eating, gambling, illicit sex, intoxication, and the search for money, so these vices should be given up by serious reciters of the holy name.[9] The monarch accepted that instruction and thereupon received *harināma* from Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.[10]

Loud Chanting

Apart from consideration of standard forms of *nāmāparādha,* another major point of contention was with *smārtas* and *smārta*-influenced persons who maintained that the *mahā-mantra* should not be chanted loudly in *kīrtana*—being a mantra imparted by guru to disciple it should be chanted only quietly, as *japa*.[*] Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura acknowledged that scripture allows for silent chanting, yet he offered *śāstrīya* substantiation of the superiority of loud chanting and cited evidence that Lord Caitanya loudly chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, as had veritable saints of recent times, including Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī and Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī.[11] Moreover, he posited that as evidenced by *hare, kṛṣṇa,* and *rāma* being in the vocative form, the *mahā-mantra* is a mode of address and thus should be vocalized, even loudly, as when speaking to someone. He wrote:

> Some foolish persons, not knowing the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra of sixteen names and thirty-two syllables to be the *mahā-mantra,* consider that it should be chanted only as *japa* and artificially present obstacles to it being chanted as *kīrtana.* But by singing Kṛṣṇa-*nāma,* a person who has attained *prema* performs complete *kīrtana* (*saṅkīrtana*) in association with devotees. The result of this kind of *kīrtana* is that everyone in the universe gains instruction about Kṛṣṇa-*nāma.*[12]

In a 1936 lecture Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī elaborately explained the necessity of loud chanting, and the detriment of not chanting aloud:

> It is prescribed to chant *kīrtana* loudly. One who does not profusely and loudly glorify the Lord will be gobbled up by the snake of time. Those who cannot appreciate that chanting the Lord's names is the highest display of mercy recommend chanting in the mind; yet by advocating to chant internally, not aloud, they simply encourage people's eagerness to talk nonsense. Mahāprabhu forbad this. He said, *kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ:* "One should constantly glorify Hari." To loudly utter the name, pastimes, and qualities of the Lord is called *kīrtana*. Whoever chants in a loud voice is a magnanimous person; a showbottle *paramahaṁsa* is not.
>
> One who does not perform Kṛṣṇa-*kīrtana* brings inauspiciousness to himself and others by his latent urge to speak. Within his heart he dwells on material pleasure and is malevolent to himself and others. Therefore Mahāprabhu said to always loudly chant the name. If those who hear this chanting are your friends, they will correct you if there is some mistake. And if one continues to chant sincerely, the Lord in the heart will purify him of mistakes in chanting. Persons who make a show of *mauna* do so out of deceit and desire for glorification, yet at any moment such persons can suddenly tumble into sin. Remaining silent and meditating for nourishing their own misconceived self-interest, they commit violence against others. If there is no chanting about Kṛṣṇa, foolish religions will become strong in this world. Due to lack of compassion, those who do not distribute the mercy of Kṛṣṇa according to time, place, and circumstance commit violence against the soul.

Two types of people do not chant: those who are great dunces—that is, the Māyāvādīs, the offenders, the meditators, those who adopt vows of silence, and so on—and those who think that they are chanting about Kṛṣṇa but actually are not.

Everything except Hari-*kīrtana* is simply chatter, like the yelping of a she-jackal. One should not let sounds other than those of Kṛṣṇa enter the ear. For this purpose one must hear in the manner prescribed by Gaura (*gaura-vihita-śravaṇa*); then one can chant in the manner prescribed by Gaura (*gaura-vihita-kīrtana*).* By observing *mauna* the process of hearing and remembering becomes obturated. Those who live alone, disregarding Hari-*smaraṇa,* close the path of *śravaṇa-kīrtana.*

Bahubhir militvā yat kīrtanaṁ tad eva saṅkīrtanam: "*Saṅkīrtana* means *kīrtana* performed with many people."[13] What is the Gauḍīya Maṭha doing these days? Many preachers are performing Hari-*kathā kīrtana* in various ways—some with melody and beat, others by dancing, some by slideshow presentations, and others by composing books and other literature. *Kīrtana* that is bawled with the intention of pleasing the senses through melody, beat, and tempo is not *kīrtana,* actually it is not *kīrtana* for Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa-*saṅkīrtana* means vocalizing the *aprākṛta* names of *aprākṛta* Kṛṣṇa and chanting about the *aprākṛta* form of Kṛṣṇa, the *aprākṛta* qualities of Kṛṣṇa, the *aprākṛta* associates of Kṛṣṇa, and the *aprākṛta* pastimes of Kṛṣṇa. Yet it is not that melody, beat, and tempo are to be rejected in Kṛṣṇa-*kīrtana;* all of them must be present. The six *rāgas* and thirty-six *rāgiṇīs* are servants of Kṛṣṇa-*kīrtana.**

It is prescribed to perform *kīrtana* with body, mind, and words. All of these should simultaneously be engaged in *kīrtana.* If the mind does not perform *kīrtana,* it will think of other things; then there will not really be *kīrtana* of Kṛṣṇa. What does Nārada do? At all times he is absorbed with all senses in Kṛṣṇa-*kīrtana.* What does Śiva do through his five mouths? He chants Kṛṣṇa-*kīrtana.* What does Brahmā do through his four mouths? He chants Kṛṣṇa-*kīrtana.* Vyāsa, Śuka, the Kumāras, and Śeṣa all chant Kṛṣṇa-*kīrtana.* All in our line of gurus chant about Kṛṣṇa. Not one of them observed *mauna-dharma. Bhāgavata-dharma* does not mean *mauna-dharma;* it means *kīrtana-dharma, saṅkīrtana-dharma.*

Those in the Gauḍīya Maṭha who produce books, write essays, and preach through periodicals are performing Kṛṣṇa-*saṅkīrtana.* By utilizing the post office and establishing printing presses they are performing Kṛṣṇa-*saṅkīrtana* by the big *mṛdaṅga.* By holding exhibitions they are performing *kīrtana.* They are performing *kīrtana* by their ideal conduct. Hari-*kīrtana* is put in book form so that it does not vanish into thin air—so that people in the future will be able to hear this Kṛṣṇa-*kīrtana.* But those who meditate alone, who remain silent, can help themselves only very little, and others not at all, not even at present, let alone the future.[14]

Invented “Kīrtana”

Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa-caraṇa dāsa Bābājī was the best-known among various “inspired saints” who had introduced various “new mantras” for singing in *“kīrtana.”* Adored as a highly advanced devotee by numerous ignorant persons, he was well educated and had made several apparent contributions to contemporary Vaiṣṇava dharma. That he and many of his numerous adherents had left comfortable bourgeois lives to accept vows of asceticism had improved the sagging public reputation of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma. In Purī, he inaugurated some novel services to Jagannātha, to be undertaken by his followers, such as daily dancing before the Lord during recital of *Śrī Gīta-govinda.* Both he and his principal disciple, Śrī Rāmadāsa Bābājī, restored and invigorated some important *śrīpāṭas* and established new *maṭhas* in several locations. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura respected that Caraṇa dāsa and Rāmadāsa were of irreproachable character, quite distinct from those who indulged in illicit sex or other obscenities in the name of Vaiṣṇava dharma. Nevertheless, their teachings were a mongrel concoction of *prākṛta-sahajiyā* ideas, which Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura stood against throughout his life, particularly for one major blemish: Caraṇa dāsa's doctrine that the *mahā-mantra* should be recited only silently in *japa,* not aloud in *kīrtana,* and his thus introducing a substitute for suppositive *kīrtana:* (*bhaja*) Nitāi-Gaura, Rādhe-Śyāma, (*japa*) Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Rāma.*

Emphasizing that the specific means given by Lord Caitanya for delivering the entire universe was loud chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, both Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī rejected as malicious violence to all *jīvas* Caraṇa dāsa's propaganda against it, and declared his contrived jingle unauthorized and offensive. Yet few could appreciate this rigid opposition, for even neutral persons reasoned that, although new, the rhyme consisted solely of the holy names and was sung sweetly and with obvious devotion by genuine sadhus. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī explained that juxtaposing the names Nitāi-Gaura with those of Rādhe-Śyāma suggests that Nitāi is related to Gaura as is Rādhā to Śyama, or was similar to placing Nityānanda-Balarāma in direct proximity of Rādhā, and thus was *siddhānta-viruddha-rasābhāsa-duṣṭa* (opposed to correct scriptural conclusions and contaminated by distastefully overlapping mellows), which became a stock phrase in the Gauḍīya Maṭha preaching armory.

Caraṇa dāsa was professedly a granddisciple of Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī, who however did not approve of his alleged discipular descendant's invented chant. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura called it *chaḍā-gāna* (a doggerel rendition) and *cchuṅcora kīrtana,* insisting that the real *kīrtana* of Mahāprabhu is and always will be: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.*

Caraṇa dāsa propagated that his *maṭha* in Kuliyā, officially named Samāj Bāḍi, was Śrīvāsa Aṅgana, the location of Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura's original home. Close by were also an imitation Advaita Bhavan and other fake sites of Mahāprabhu's pastime places. Once Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was walking past Samāj Bāḍi, heading toward the main temple of Mahāprabhu in Kuliyā, with Śrīla Siddhānta Sarasvatī following a few steps behind; this was before Śrīla

Siddhānta Sarasvatī's initation by Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī, and many supposed Vaiṣṇavas were eager to have him as a disciple. Just after Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura passed Samāj Bāḍi, Caraṇa dāsa suddenly came out and eulogized Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī: "You are our future prospect. We are looking to you." Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī stopped briefly, then hastened ahead to join Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who asked him what Caraṇa dāsa had said. After being told, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura warned Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī, "Watch out. Don't get caught in that man's trap."

When Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī asked how he had received his new "mantra," Caraṇa dāsa said it had come to him in a trance. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī told him it was balderdash and if he would abandon it they could preach together. Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī disapproved that Caraṇa dāsa and his followers, as typical *prākṛta-sahajiyās,* openly and regularly discussed, sung of, and enacted Kṛṣṇa's pastimes with the *gopīs.* The devotional ecstasies displayed by Caraṇa dāsa had led many to laud him as the reappearance of Mahāprabhu, but when Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī personally observed them he accused Caraṇa dāsa of playacting for the sake of name and fame. He further criticized Caraṇa dāsa's patronizing several of his disciples in their *sakhī-bhekī* practices. Particularly his close associate known as "Lalitā Sakhī" shamelessly misappropriated the name, and wholesale imitated the characteristics of, the foremost female attendant of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Although a man, this "Lalitā Sakhī" dressed in sari and bangles, spoke in a lilting, womanlike timbre, applied red dye to his feet, and in all ways adopted the gait and mannerisms of Bengali women, even observing isolation during "menstruation." Yet by the influence of Kali-yuga, Caraṇa dāsa and his weird aberrations became respected and popular, and to people of little spiritual discrimination he appeared to be an ecstatic pure-hearted Vaiṣṇava.

From 1902 to 1904, while sojourning in Purī, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī frequently came in contact with Caraṇa dāsa, although their interactions tended to be strained. Yet in 1904, along with certain other *bābājīs* of Bengal, Caraṇa dāsa accompanied Śrīla Siddhānta Sarasvatī in a *kīrtana* group to Māyāpur to participate in the Gaura-*jayantī* festival there. The following year Caraṇa dāsa told Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura that he wished to annually take a party on a tour of Navadvīpa-*dhāma.*

Around this time Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had a prolonged debate with Caraṇa dāsa, who finally conceded that his "mantra" was unauthorized and he had been wrong to propagate it. Yet he did not withdraw it. Within six months he exhibited symptoms of pathological madness, and soon thereafter died. Nevertheless, Rāmadāsa Bābājī continued to spread that bogus mantra throughout Orissa, Bengal, and Vṛndāvana. This deviant sect being particularly preponderant in Purī, it was there that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī most vigorously spoke against it.[*]

One time a visitor in Purī asked Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura his opinion of that chant, to which he replied, "Imagine that you are absorbed in solving a mathematical problem. Then even if someone speaks to you, you will not hear it. Similarly, we are fully devoted to our chanting. We do not hear this imaginary name. We are always thinking of our worshipable Lord."

Hari-mohana Pattnaik, an income tax officer for Cuttack, once asked Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī why he so strongly opposed that chant, since it consisted of the holy names Nitāi, Gaura, Rādhe, and Śyāma. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura explained, "We have to follow *śāstra*. *Kali-santaraṇa Upaniṣad* clearly states: *hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare, hare rāma hare rāma, rāma rāma hare hare*. Śrī Caitanya did not say 'Nitāi-Gaura, Rādhe-Śyāma,' but gave us the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. We cannot introduce manmade imaginary *kīrtana.*"

When at a *kīrtana* function in a Calcutta residence a doctor started to intone this fabricated rhyme, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura interrupted him and elaborately explained the faults in so doing. But the doctor again began the same song, upon which Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his entourage got up and left.

Whenever Rāmadāsa Bābājī's followers encountered Gauḍīya Maṭha members they would loudly chant their brummagem mantra just to antagonize them. On the way from their *ākhḍā,* the Jhāñjapīṭā Maṭha, to the Ṭoṭā-gopīnātha temple, they would deliberately pass by Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha bellowing "Nitāi-Gaura, Rādhe-Śyāma." In response, a tin drum was kept at Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha for beating as an alarm signal whenever Rāmadāsa's myrmidons came by. Upon hearing it, the devotees of Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha would rush out and energetically perform Hare Kṛṣṇa *kīrtana* to drown out the *prākṛta-sahajiyās'* din. Eventually Śrī Rāmadāsa Bābājī told his adherents to take another route to Ṭoṭā-gopīnātha and not disturb the Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha devotees.

During his stay in Purī in 1936, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu lead a *kīrtana* procession around the *dhāma,* with the specific order to enter Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's *samādhi* (occupied and managed by Caraṇa dāsa's followers) ebulliently chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* preceded by the alternating refrains *mahāprabhur deoyā nāma haridāser gāoyā nāma,* "the name given by Mahāprabhu, the name sung by Haridāsa," and *bhaktivinoder gāoyā nāma,* "the name sung by Bhaktivinoda."

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī once instructed his disciples to put a notice on every tree in every village in Bengal and Orissa stating that the "Nitāi-Gaura, Rādhe-Śyāma" rhyme is manmade, not a legitimate mantra, and against the conclusion of *śāstra*. And at one point he decided to personally go and tell Śrī Rāmadāsa Bābājī to stop its recitation. As he was approaching the Jhāñjapīṭā Maṭha an inmate saw him coming and started singing "Nitāi-Gaura, Rādhe-Śyāma." On hearing that, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī appeared pained; he then returned to his own Maṭha.[15]

Rāgānuga-bhakti

Most *bābājīs* and some *jāta-gosāñis* bestowed upon initiates *siddha-praṇālī,* a system whereby a beginner was informed of his supposed *siddha-deha* (perfected body) and personality within the spiritual realm of Vṛndāvana. Apart from the few who focused on *sakhya-bhāva*, Gauḍīya *sādhakas* aimed at *mañjarī* status, about which they were apprised of eleven details (*ekādaśa-bhāva*) of their theoretical identity: *sambandha* (relationship with Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa), *vayasa* (age), *nāma* (name), *rūpa* (form, or bodily appearance), *yūtha-praveśa* (entrance into a particular group of associates), *veṣa* (attire), *ājñā* (receiving permission or orders), *vāsa-sthāna* (place of residence), *sevā* (the particular services allotted to him), *parākāṣṭhāśvāsa* (highest aspiration), and *pālya-dāsī-bhāva* (disposition of a sheltered maidservant). By studying maps of the primeval Vṛndāvana, a practitioner would memorize the roads and secret jungle trails to be traversed to sites where he could theoretically partake in pastimes with Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. In meditation he would prefigure his role in *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā* with the goal to eventually permanently enter therein.

Thus from the beginning, novices were hypothetically given admission into the perfectional stage of *rāgānuga-bhakti,* the sublime path of following the behavior and adopting the mood of liberated associates of the Lord. Of course Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura knew that *mañjarī-sādhana* had been introduced and practiced by recognized Gauḍīya *ācāryas* and that *siddha-deha* meditation is stated in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (2.8.229) as the only means to attain service to Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in *sakhī-bhāva.* However, he explained that this means that to qualify for assisting Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in their delectation of divine love one must first achieve a transcendental body, beyond the constraints of matter.[*] Stressing this point of requisite *adhikāra,* he decried the practice of teaching, even by gurus learned in *śāstra,* these esoteric topics to unqualified disciples. Although his differences with the proponents of wide disbursal of *siddha-praṇālī* were not principally over the meaning (*sambandha*) and goal (*prayojana*) of Gauḍīya practice, but in the details of attaining it (*abhidheya*), this contention became a major source of disagreement with those who considered themselves custodians of the *rāgānuga-mārga.*

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī upheld that *līlā-smaraṇa* was suitable only for the most exalted devotees and was farcical if attempted by persons of uncontrolled mind and senses (as was almost wholly the case at that time), devoid of even basic *sambandha-jñāna,* whose imitative and immature meditation on the apparently concupiscent affairs of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa would perforce effectuate their fall into turpitude. He warned that just as anyone except Lord Śiva would perish by drinking poison, a conditioned and thus unfit person will be destroyed by hearing, chanting about, and contemplating intimate pastimes such as *rāsa-līlā.*[16]

Although accepted Gauḍīya *ācāryas* had stated that the qualification for *siddha-praṇālī* initiation is eagerness to serve Kṛṣṇa in Vraja-*līlā,* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura distinguished between immature desire based on mundane preconceptions, and the mature eagerness that arises from factual spiritual progress based on *sambandha-jñāna.*[*] He would say (in English),

"First deserve and then desire." He satirized the *sahajiyā-bhāva* of imagining oneself to be privy to arcane pastimes while wholly overlooking one's enormous lack of eligibility, by likening the endeavor to "teach" *rāgānuga-bhakti* to that of instructing a five-year-old in adult sexual behavior; in due time such feelings arise naturally, but trying to instigate their premature appearance is a perversion. He warned:

> The *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā* and related topics that you have heard about from Vaiṣṇavas in Vṛndāvana is undoubtedly worshipable. Yet how these pastimes are conceived in the state of infestation by *anarthas* is not at all worshipable. By repeated chanting, a special individual is capable of knowing these matters, which is the identity of the *svarūpa.* By attainment of *anartha-nivṛtti,* one's *svarūpa* is automatically awakened and the eternal mode of thinking that is innate to it manifests. Those who profess to teach or reveal this identity are deceitful, for it cannot be done.
>
> On the other hand, if a devotee receives some realization after sincerely chanting for a long time, he should go to the *sad*-guru or an advanced devotee and ask that that realization be confirmed and also purified by him. The *svarūpa* has eleven (*ekādaśa*) aspects. There are many cases of unscrupulous gurus who artificially force-feed these topics to unqualified practitioners, yet that cannot be called a symptom of spiritual perfection. Those who have achieved *svarūpa-siddhi* gain such realization through internal revelation; the guru's only involvement is to assist his disciples' ongoing advancement. As a *sādhaka* progresses toward *siddhi,* all these things are naturally revealed within the *sevonmukha* heart.[17]

In his introduction to *Sree Krishna Chaitanya,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī further slammed false teachers of higher principles:

> One who presumes to instruct others without himself experiencing the nature of the course of loving devotion, or who, although himself cognizant of the nature of the path of devotion, instructs the disciple regarding the same without due consideration of the aptitude of the latter, is a pseudo-guru. It is necessary by all means to renounce the guidance of such a guru. Those who, falling into the clutches of the pseudo-guru by neglect of the proper exercise of their judgment, deceive themselves by consenting to adopt the elevated grade of worship that they are not entitled to, fall under the category of the third class of offenders described above. But those who even after becoming aware of their unfitness persist in practicing the higher method of worship, thereby hoping to gain honor and wealth for themselves, commit the offense of religious hypocrisy. Until this defect is discarded there can be no appearance of the principle of spontaneous liking for Kṛṣṇa. These hypocrites only deceive the world by their display of external insignia of sectarianism and pseudo-renunciation.[*] Those who choose to show their regard for these arrogant persons in consideration of the external marks exhibited by them, thus failing to attain the favor of Kṛṣṇa, only prove to be thorns in the side of the people of this world.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura taught that genuine desire for perfection automatically manifests from

positive attachment to Kṛṣṇa grounded in freedom from material desires. He thus recommended:

> First chant the name of Gaurāṅga. By His mercy there will be *anartha-nivṛtti.* Then there is the possibility of *artha-pravṛtti.* If one does not obey Caitanya Mahāprabhu, both his worship of Rādhārāṇī and his claims to be a *mañjarī* are false.[18]
>
> A *sādhaka* still infested with *anarthas* should worship Gaura; when free from *anarthas* he may worship Kṛṣṇa. While yet unfit due to *anarthas,* anyone who deceptively attempts to approach Kṛṣṇa will be slain by Kṛṣṇa's Viṣṇu aspect, as were Agha, Baka, and Pūtanā.[19]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī gave the analogy of an opium smoker standing on one side of a river, with the fire for lighting his pipe on the other; similarly, a devotee desirous to unite with Kṛṣṇa remains separated by the raging river of his disqualifications. In his commentary on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* 1.7.17, he quoted Śrī Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura regarding how to acquire the requisite qualifications:

> *gaurāṅga balite habe pulaka śarīra*
> *hari hari balite nayane ba'be nīra*
>
> *āra kabe nitāicāṅda karuṇā karibe*
> *saṁsāra-vāsanā mora kabe tuccha habe*
>
> *viṣaya chāḍiyā kabe śuddha habe mana*
> *kabe hāma heraba śrī-vṛndāvana*
>
> When will there be eruptions on my body as soon as I chant the name of Lord Caitanya, and incessant torrents of tears as soon as I chant the holy names Hare Kṛṣṇa? When will Lord Nityānanda be merciful toward me and free me from all desires for material enjoyment? When will my mind be completely freed from all contamination of desires for sensual pleasure? Only at that time will I be able to understand Vṛndāvana.

Although in his writings Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had described *mañjarī-sādhana,* he also warned against premature attempts to undertake it:

> *adhikāra nā labhiyā siddha-deha bhāve*
> *viparyaya buddhi janme śaktira abhāve*
>
> If without achieving the required eligibility one contemplates his *siddha-deha,* then due to lack of transcendental strength he will develop opposite inclinations.[20]

So even if *sādhakas* were austere and practicing assiduously, mere wishful reification of their *siddha-svarūpa* would not actually bring them to Kṛṣṇa, but oblige them to remain in *saṁsāra.* If they claimed to have entered the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa yet had even the slightest tinge of desire

to enjoy Kṛṣṇa—rather than to assist His servants in serving Him—then they actually partook in the ungodly outlook (*ahaṁ bhogī*) and thus were imitative and offensive, cheating themselves and others.* He deemed the purported *smaraṇa* of *siddha-praṇālī* merely habitual repetition of a particular mental speculation by persons imagining themselves on the path of spontaneous devotion but actually lurching in the muck of misunderstanding. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī cited the case of a young *vairāgī* who took up residence in a small hut beside that of Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī, and like him begged alms, wore short soiled cloth, and spent hours sitting and chanting—prompting Bābājī Mahārāja to wryly remark, "A woman cannot produce a child simply by screaming and simulating labor pains." In other words, mere imitation of *paramahaṁsas* cannot give rise to the perfectional level; a genuine connection with the higher plane is required.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was accused by proponents of the conjectural *rāgā-mārga* of being a desiccate scholar contaminated by *jñāna.* Yet by equating the impersonalists' arid speculations that passed as knowledge, to *bhakti-tattva-jñāna* (knowledge of, as the backbone of, and intrinsic to *śuddha-bhakti*), those *prākṛta-sahajiyās* simply accentuated their woeful ignorance of even the basic tenets of *śuddha-bhakti.* A similar indictment was that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura taught only the primary stages of *bhakti,* and by emphasizing *vidhi-mārga* and not elaborating on intimate *līlās,* he deprived his disciples entrance into the advanced levels of *bhakti.* He explained his rationale:

> I am sometimes asked by various persons why we do not give to everyone the realized method of service. But I cannot understand how the conditions of *siddhas* and *sādhakas* may be supposed as identical. It surpasses my comprehension how the service and realization of souls free from all defects can be practiced during the period of novitiate, which is full of defects. If any person happens to belong to the order of *siddhas* he may kindly inform me; then I can know about the specific nature of his realized self.[21]
>
> Perception of the elevated position of Rādhā's *pālya-dāsīs* eludes human capability. None except Rādhā's own associates, who are eternally devoted to Her service, can enter into these topics. You will be able to grasp all this on the day you no longer experience the external world, when you consider all insignificant morality, austerity, *karma, jñāna,* or *yoga* to be disgusting, when you lose taste for the majestic topics of Nārāyaṇa, and when you appreciate that dancing at the *rāsa-līlā* is not such a formidable subject. Service to Śrī Rādhā-Govinda is not expressible in mundane language. The words *svakīya* and *parakīya* become intermingled with our thought patterns inclined to sense gratification.* Therefore persons qualified to apprehend and hear Śrī Rādhā-Govinda *līlā-kathā* are most rare; to assert that there are none in this world is no exaggeration.[22]

Although not gaudily advertised, that the Gauḍīya Maṭha was meant for achieving the *rāga-bhakti* of Vraja was clearly indicated in much of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's *kathā,* and was encapsulated in his formula *pūjala rāga-patha gaurava bhaṅge.* Yet as a genuine emissary of the faultless path given by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, the path of ultimate benefit for the entire

universe, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was acutely concerned that misunderstanding and misrepresentation of *rāgānuga-bhakti* were conversely causing religious turmoil. Particularly because Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī had revealed Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *mano-'bhīṣṭa*—inner pining in the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī for union with Kṛṣṇa, which constitutes the ultimate focus of *rāgānuga-bhakti*—he was recognized as the leader of the Six Gosvāmīs and all subsequent generations of Gauḍīyas.[†] Furthermore, in pursuance of the desire of Śrī Caitanya, as the Gauḍīya *abhidheya-ācārya* (authority on devotional praxes) Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī had established through seminal books, especially *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu,* the superlative path of *rāgānuga-bhakti.* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī certainly accepted *rāgānuga-bhakti* as the highest *sādhana* of *rūpānuga-bhakti,* but he maintained that generally before being gifted with *rāgānuga-bhakti* one had to be fixed in the elementary practices of *rūpānuga-bhakti,* by adopting the sequential approach outlined by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, which helped an aspirant to develop initial taste for devotional service and thus invite the mercy whereby meaningful desire to perform *rāgānuga-bhakti* could arise within his purified heart. In Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's words:

> *ādau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu- saṅgo 'tha bhajana-kriyā*
> *tato 'nartha-nivṛttiḥ syāt tato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥ*
>
> *athāsaktis tato bhāvas tataḥ premābhyudañcati*
> *sādhakānām ayaṁ premṇaḥ prādurbhāve bhavet kramaḥ*
>
> In the beginning there must be *śraddhā,* faith that devotional service to Kṛṣṇa is the only genuine necessity of every living being. Such faith will impell one to seek *sādhu-saṅga,* association with persons elevated in *bhakti.* This leads to *bhajana-kriyā,* initiation by an authentic spiritual master and under his instruction taking to regulated devotional service. By performing that under the guidance of the guru one comes to the stage of *anartha-nivṛtti,* cessation of all mundane attachment and contamination. Then comes *niṣṭhā,* constant engagement in *bhajana* by mind, body, and words, which leads to *ruci*—taste, or conscious desire, based on deliberation—for devotional service. *Ruci* leads one further to *āsakti,* the heartfelt desire to serve Kṛṣṇa, which prepares the consciousness for the appearance of *bhāva,* the preliminary platform of transcendental love of Godhead. Gradually emotions intensify, and finally there is an awakening of *prema,* pure love. This is the progressive path whereby *prema,* love of Godhead, manifests for the *sādhaka* in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. (Brs 1.4.15–16)

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura summarized this path:

> In *sādhana-bhakti* first comes *śraddhā,* from which comes *sādhu-saṅga,* which results in *bhajana-kriyā,* from which comes *anartha-nivṛtti;* next comes *niṣṭhā,* from which arises *ruci,* and then *āsakti.* By serving Kṛṣṇa, that *āsakti* gradually transforms into *bhāva,* the culmination of which is *prema.*[23]

Citing this systematic process of advancement, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura asserted that

confabulation cannot qualify one as an associate of the Lord, that realization of intimate *līlās* and one's eternal spiritual form within them is not possible for and should not even be discussed by persons not yet freed from material desires, and that the authenticity of ecstatic symptoms was to be judged according to the analysis of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu.*[*] He considered it preposterous and obnoxiously offensive that persons still infatuated by foul sexual desires dared to freely discuss the irreproachable loving affairs of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In this regard he would quote the Bengali adage *eṅcaḍe pākā,* referring to a freshly sprouted jackfruit that has prematurely ripened when too small to have any actual fruit inside; from the outside it may look appealing, but it bears no substance, so is fit only to be discarded.

Unlike the *prākrta-sahajiyās'* busily burnishing their profiles as *premīs,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī neither asserted nor insinuated that he had *prema.* Nor did he glibly drop words like "Rādhā" or *prema* as if they were everyday topics. Contrary to the *prākṛta-sahajiyās'* usage, among Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's followers discussions of *tattva* and *siddhānta* were considerably more common than those on Rādhā and *prema.* He raised his disciples to the platform of *prema* by first giving them *sambandha-jñāna,* by incessantly delineating the process of *rūpānuga-bhakti* designed to waken *prema,* and by emphasizing *sevā-vṛtti* (service attitude), the inherent characteristic of *prema.* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī explained that Rādhā could properly be approached only by imbibing at least a particle of the immeasurable *sevā-vṛtti* that constituted the essence of Her existence. He would state, *rādhita anayā iti rādhā* (She by whom service is effected is Rādhā), and warned that without *sevā-vṛtti,* innumerable tears or other insinuations of having achieved Rādhā and *prema* could only be imitative.[†] In distinguishing genuine from imitative *prema,* he would cite the anecdote of "four-anna *bhāva*" and quote the song by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura beginning:[*]

ki āra baliba tore mana?
mukhe bala 'prema prema' vastutaḥ tyajiyā hema,
śūnya-granthi añcale bandhana

> What more shall I say to you, mind? Performing only lip-service, you utter *"Prema! Prema!"* but are actually rejecting gold and tying an empty knot in the border of your cloth.[‡] *(Kalyāṇa-kalpataru)*

On the scientific basis of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu,* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura carefully distinguished corrupted forms of *sevā-vṛtti* whereby *prākrta-sahajiyās* deluded themselves and others into thinking that they possessed *prema,* from the unadulterated service attitude that by its very nature yields *prema.* Accordingly, he guided practitioners to adopt the graded process from initial *śraddhā* through the *anartha-nivṛtti* level, to gradually purify their heart and progress toward realizing their spiritual identity in truth rather than imagination. He was not known to have taught *rāgānuga-bhakti* to anyone by revealing that person's *siddha-svarūpa* or *ekādaśa-bhāva,* although there are indications that he might have divulged such topics privately to a few qualified disciples. He did indeed reveal Vraja-*bhakti,* but in a manner that he described as *pūjala rāga-patha:* the path of full reverence for *rāgātmika-bhaktas*, as opposed to

imitation of them or presuming oneself to be on their exalted level.

Out of actual compassion and concern for his wards, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura realistically concentrated his teachings on repeated and detailed instruction in *sambandha-jñāna.* He warned that for those immature in *bhakti,* an exaggerated and imbalanced inclination for hearing the pastimes of Śrī Rādha-Kṛṣṇa while insufficiently focusing on *sambandha-jñāna* would simply result in their becoming *sahajiyās.*[24] And he said that those eager to see and hear of Kṛṣṇa's form and pastimes yet not learn *sambandha-jñāna* are ipso facto *prākṛta-sahajiyās.*[25] He considered that by hearing about the apparently profligate pastimes of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa without systematic education in the immaculate principles underlying them, nor practical guidance in becoming free from material desires, nor even a basic grounding in virtuous behavior, persons would, instead of becoming *paramahaṁsas,* become depraved. He cautioned:

> Lack of knowledge of *sambandha-jñāna,* in other words, not knowing our own identity, will much impede our quest for the ultimate goal of life. If we make a show of *bhajana* by dressing as devotees and chanting countless rounds but do not read Śrī Caitanya's Sanātana-*śikṣā,* the upshot will simply be bile secretion and *nāmāparādha.*[26]

By thus emphasizing *sambandha-jñāna,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī aimed to inculcate awareness and acceptance of the *jīva's* constitutional position as an unconditional servant of Kṛṣṇa and His servants, among whom the principal were the Vraja-*gopīs.* Followers of Caitanya Mahāprabhu aspired for the topmost attainment of a devotee, encapsulated in the Lord's identifying Himself as *gopī-bhartuḥ pada-kamalayor dāsa-dāsānudāsaḥ,* a servant of the servants of Him who maintains the Vraja-*gopīs.*[*] Without this *sambandha-jñāna,* (clear perception of one's existential position) as the basis of *śuddha-bhakti,* and of the authorized process of its practice (*abhidheya*) however painstakingly undertaken, *bhajana* could not reach to the ultimate necessity of attaining Kṛṣṇa-*prema* (*prayojana*).

Anartha-nivṛtti, the prerequisite for higher *bhajana,* depends on at least theoretical appreciation of *śāstrīya* truths, because *siddhānta-alasa jana anartha to' chāḍe nā:* "A person lazy in properly understanding *siddhānta* does not give up *anarthas.*"[27] The attempt not based on *bhakti-siddhānta* to realize or enter into Kṛṣṇa-*līlā* must necessarily be a manifestation of *prākṛta-sahajiyā* or Māyāvāda perversity. Far from qualifying the practitioner for reaching Vraja, it binds him in the misconception of being liberated when he is not, an even greater illusion than that suffered by ordinary conditioned souls, which can cause only disturbance to himself and others who associate with him. Yet simply comprehending and interiorizing genuine *sambandha-jñāna,* the first stage in Vaiṣṇava *siddhānta,* would itself impel further advancement up to the highest rung.[†]

While stressing *sambandha-jñāna,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī did not neglect the importance of *prayojana,* the necessity that *sambandha-jñāna* and *abhidheya* are meant to lead to. That he wanted his disciples to be familiar with *prayojana-tattva* is apparent from his urging them to read *Śrī Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta* and *Jaiva Dharma,* both of which first outline

sambandha-jñāna and *abhidheya* and conclude with detailed yet restrained descriptions of the highest levels of Vraja-*bhakti.* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī exhorted his disciples to progress beyond the primary level and aim for that superlative platform: "Don't let your days pass trying only for *anartha-nivṛtti. Artha-pravṛtti* is also necessary. *Anartha-nivṛtti* is required until *artha-pravṛtti* begins. As *artha-pravṛtti* waxes, *anartha-nivṛtti* becomes unimportant."[28] Thus he pointed his disciples toward understanding the special gift of Lord Caitanya and the ultimate goal of all His preaching, namely, the most intimate exchanges between Kṛṣṇa and His *rāgātmika-bhaktas,* hearing of which from qualified devotees might in a fortunate soul waken *lobhamayī-śraddhā* (faith derived from intense greed to serve Kṛṣṇa in accord with the sweet sentiments of the Vraja-*vāsīs*), the starting point for *rāgānuga-sādhana.*[*] As stated by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī:

> *rāgātmikaika-niṣṭhā ye vraja-vāsi-janādayaḥ*
> *teṣāṁ bhāvāptaye lubdho bhaved atrādhikāravān*
>
> *tat-tad-bhāvādi-mādhurye śrute dhīr yad apekṣate*
> *nātra śāstraṁ na yuktiṁ ca tal-lobhotpatti-lakṣaṇam*
>
> The qualification for *rāgānugā-bhakti* is greed for attaining a *bhāva* similar to that of the Vraja-*vāsīs,* who are fixed solely in *rāgātmikā-bhakti.* The appearance of that greed is indicated when, by regularly hearing from scripture, one realizes to some degree the sweetness of their love, after which his intelligence no longer depends on logic and rules of scripture. (Brs 1.2.291–92)

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī stated, *vraja-vāsī-gaṇa pracārakadhana:* "Vraja-*vāsīs* are the treasure of preachers."[29] He imparted knowledge of *prayojana* in relation to and balanced with that of *sambandha* and *abhidheya.* He described *prayojana-tattva* in a manner suitable and instructive for *sādhakas,* ever distinguishing between *prākṛta* and *aprākṛta* concepts of love:

> *ātmendriya-prīti-vāñchā—tāre bali 'kāma'*
> *kṛṣṇendriya-prīti-icchā dhare 'prema' nāma*
>
> The desire to gratify one's own senses is lust (*kāma*), whereas the desire to please Kṛṣṇa's senses is pure love (*prema*). (Cc 1.4.165)

Thus Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's presentation of and approach to Kṛṣṇa-*līlā* differed considerably from that of *prākṛta-sahajiyās,* whose detailed evocations of pastimes deliberately aroused and nourished mundane quasispiritual sentiments in their neophyte audiences. He avoided reciting Kṛṣṇa-*līlā* in a manner that could lend to its being misconstrued as akin to the *jaḍa-rasa* of ordinary romantic narrations. Instead, he outlined those aspects of Kṛṣṇa-*līlā* that highlighted its distinguishing feature, the *aprākṛta* desire to satisfy Kṛṣṇa.

Although elsewhere Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī approved the hearing, even by persons still beset with *anarthas,* of Kṛṣṇa's childhood pastimes, in at least one case he restrained a trusted

disciple from dilating those topics.[*] Śrī Praṇavānanda Brahmacārī, deputed to deliver evening lectures at Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, of his own accord was reading from and explaining the portion of the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that outlines Kṛṣṇa's childhood pastimes. Many cultured gentlemen began to attend daily, highly appreciating Praṇavānanda Prabhu's presentation. When word of this reached Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī in Purī, he sent a message citing "*prathamaṁ nāmnaḥ...*" and instructing Praṇavānanda Prabhu to desist from further public discussion of that section.[†] He cited the example of Mahāprabhu's repeatedly listening to Gadādhara Paṇḍita recite the descriptions in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* of Dhruva Mahārāja and Prahlāda Mahārāja, and explained that Mahāprabhu did so to set the example for aspiring devotees of the need to forswear false emotion and become capable of experiencing genuine spiritual feelings.[‡]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī cited Śrīla Vyāsadeva himself as having cautiously refrained from directly mentioning the name Rādhikā in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* even though She is the ultimate person to be worshiped by intimate knowers of the *Bhāgavatam*. He warned that those not wholly qualified, totally free from even traces of desire for personal enjoyment, should not hear works such as *Gīta-govinda* and *Govinda-līlāmṛta:*

> Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī's *Gīta-govinda,* Śrīla Rāmānanda Rāya's *Jagannātha-vallabha-nāṭaka,* Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Vidagdha-mādhava,* the *padāvalīs* of Śrī Caṇḍīdāsa and Vidyāpati, Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī's *Rādhā-rasa-sudhā-nidhi,* Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī's *Vilāpa-kusumāñjali,* Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja's *Govinda-līlāmṛta,* and Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's *Kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmṛta*—you will be able to read all these books and become qualified to enter into the *madhura-rasa* permeating them when you are completely free from the grasp of consciousness dominated by desires for enjoying the external world. Then the storehouse of good fortune will be opened to you, and you will be its befitting heirs.[30]
>
> The books of Vidyāpati, Caṇḍīdāsa, and Jayadeva, which describe the transformations of love of Śrī Rādhikā for Kṛṣṇa, were tasted by Lord Caitanya in the company of persons like Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya and Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, who were the best of *paramahaṁsas* and fully conversant with the truths of incomparable, wholly spiritual Kṛṣṇa-*rasa.* Such feelings are to be continuously cultivated by those highly fortunate persons indifferent to either the enjoyment or rejection of both this temporary gross world and the subtle world beyond, who are supremely liberated and detached and always aspire for service to Śrī Rādhā.
>
> In the name of research, discussion of the writings of these three by critical students of mundane poetry, by atheistic literati, or by persons concerned with bodily indulgence, or also by the *prākṛta-sahajiyā sampradāya,* which makes a show of *rāgānuga* for the sake of sense gratification, is simply an exhibition of impudence. As a result, worldly debauchery and atheism increase, causing such persons who misuse *rasa-śāstra* to go to hell. One should not misunderstand the pastimes of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa to be activities of a

young mundane boy and girl. The mundane sexual activities of young boys and girls are most abominable. Therefore, those who are in bodily consciousness and desire personal enjoyment are forbidden to indulge in discussing the transcendental pastimes of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.[31]

Owing to the generally accepted understanding that many poems ascribed to Caṇḍīdāsa and Vidyāpati were not actually their compositions, many persons would approach Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī to determine the status of particular writings. A disciple of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura named Śrī Sītānātha dāsa Mahāpātra Bhakti Tīrtha had repeatedly written to Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī requesting that he resolve this issue by consulting Śrīla Bhaktivinoda. When Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī eventually did so, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura stated, "Keep the songs of Caṇḍīdāsa and Vidyāpati with you for your personal *bhajana;* there is no objection to this. But don't reveal them to others. And if you do share them with others, then write above them 'Confidential' and double-underline the word."[32]

For several days in February 1936 at the Yogapīṭha, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's morning lectures were on a prefatory verse from *Gīta-govinda:*

yadi hari-smaraṇe sarasaṁ manaḥ yadi vilāsa-kalāsu kutūhalam
madhura-komala-kānta-padāvalīṁ śṛṇu tadā jayadeva-sarasvatīm

He commented that this verse presents the highest subject of Veda and Vedānta, and that if one desires liberation from material existence, if one desires to be attracted by Bhagavān's transcendental pastimes, if by Hari-*smaraṇa* one's mind is enriched with *rasa,* then in the manner undertaken by guru and Vaiṣṇavas, the sweet and charming verses of Śrī Jayadeva's *Gīta-govinda* are suitable for discussion.[*] He explained that actual eagerness for realizing Kṛṣṇa's pastimes is characterized by total absence of penchant toward mundane thoughts, for the two cannot coexist. Discussion of *Gīta-govinda* should take place when one is finished with useless talks of family affairs and so on.[33 †]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura warned that persons desiring to enjoy rather than serve Kṛṣṇa are never permitted into the arena of His enjoyment; they are offenders to Śrīmatī Rādhikā, the custodian of Kṛṣṇa's pleasure. He advised:

When you are sincerely eager to serve Kṛṣṇa, your eternal connection to Him in one of five *rasas* will be opened to you. Without being liberated, no one is eligible to serve Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is solely Rādhārāṇī's object. Without serving Rādhā, no one can ever be eligible to serve Kṛṣṇa. May you be overwhelmed with desire to be situated in your eternal individual serving position in *madhura-rasa* as an eternal maidservant of Rādhā's *pālya-dāsīs.*[34]

While instructing his followers in the gradual process of *rūpānuga-bhakti,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī simultaneously guided them toward its capstone by endeavoring to instill in them the attitude of selfless service that was the essence of *rāgātmikā-bhakti.* He

achieved this by engaging them in various services and by constant didactics regarding the nature of selflessness, emphasizing that both gross and subtle forms of selfishness must be discarded. He particularly insisted that it is the duty of genuine *rūpānugas* to serve the mission of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī by propagating *śuddha-bhakti.*[35] In this way, by appropriate preaching and also by inducing his disciples to preach appropriately, he inducted them into *rāgānuga-bhakti* while simultaneously safeguarding them from premature attempts at realizing, and from imitating esoteric practices of, *rāgānuga-bhakti.*

To extrinsic vision, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura either abandoned *rāgānuga-bhajana* or gave a new definition of and vantage on it, converting it into a process so confidential as to appear almost nonexistent, while practically rejecting the established *rāgānuga* tradition. Yet his teaching that there was no need for the meditational *siddha-praṇālī* was not rejection of the process per se, but of its widespread misappropriation. And precisely because he intensely desired to bestow upon every *jīva* in the universe the inner secrets of Vraja-*līlā,* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was prudent in dispensing the nectar that he himself was profusely enriched with, knowing that the aspirations of conditioned souls often galloped ahead of their aptitude. He wanted to prepare persons to receive the real thing, rather than foist on them an imagined excellence. He summarized his methodology in the words *pūjala rāga-patha* (profound veneration for and commitment to uphold the dignity of the path of *rāga* and the superlative devotees who graced it), an attitude suitable for both *sādhakas* and *siddhas* that expressed the tenor of his mission and of his very existence.

Eligibility through Harināma

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was concerned that indiscriminate dissemination of spurious *siddha-praṇālī* had resulted in smutty behavior camouflaged as spontaneous devotion, which had led to many persons being misguided and also to diminished public regard for Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's movement. The proclivity for catapulting oneself onto the uppermost echelon of spiritual attainment without sensible consideration of one's actual eligibility was a theme that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura found necessary to address repeatedly, for neophyte devotees were prone to be allured by persons who in all respects seemed like *premi-bhaktas* and promised immediate entrance into the highest realms without having to undergo primary practices of purification.

In accordance with the genuine *praṇālī* (path) of *siddhas* (perfect devotees), Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's approach to *rāgānuga-bhakti* stressed *kīrtana* over artificial *smaraṇa,* emphasizing that all other processes of *bhakti,* including *smaraṇa,* could be properly executed only in conjunction with and by the mercy and strength derived from *nāma-bhajana;* that chanting of the holy name was itself *siddha-praṇālī;* and that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu had declared chanting of *harināma,* particularly the *mahā-mantra,* to be the only *praṇālī* for Kali-yuga, whereby all persons can attain *sarva-siddhi* (complete perfection):

> *hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare*
> *hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*
>
> *prabhu bale, "kahilāṅ ei mahā-mantra*
> *iha japa' giyā sabe kariyā nirbandha*
>
> *ihā haite sarva-siddhi haibe sabāra*
> *sarva-kṣaṇa bolo ithe vidhi nāhi āra"*
>
> The Lord said, "I have told you the *mahā-mantra.* Chant it regularly according to the prescribed system, according to a vow, and with one-pointed attention. By this you will attain all perfection. Simply chant always. There are no other rules for chanting, such as those governing proper time and place as are prescribed for other Vedic mantras." (Cb 2.23.76–78)

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura insisted that *sādhana-bhakti* based on *nāma-bhajana* must precede admission to the *rāga-patha;* he emphasized the need to become free from *anarthas,* and that the means to do so was by the mercy of *śrī-nāma:*

> We have no duty other than taking the holy name. We cannot actually take the name as long as we have *anarthas.* There is mostly *nāmāparādha,* and sometimes by chance maybe *nāmābhāsa.* One must from the beginning endeavor to become free from *anarthas.* By sincerely calling out to Bhagavān the *jīva* may attain *anartha-nivṛtti*—there is no other

means.[36]

He quoted Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī on the natural escalating course beginning with chanting the Lord's *nāma* (name), whereby realization of His *rūpa* (form and beauty), *guṇa* (qualities), and eventually *līlā* (pastimes) would progressively manifest:

> *prathamaṁ nāmnaḥ śravaṇam antaḥ-karaṇa-śuddhy-artham apekṣyam. śuddhe cāntaḥ-karaṇe rūpa-śravaṇena tad-udaya-yogyatā bhavati. samyag udite ca rūpe guṇānāṁ sphuraṇaṁ sampadyeta, sampanne ca guṇānāṁ sphuraṇe parikara-vaiśiṣṭyena tad-vaiśiṣṭyaṁ sampadyate. tatas teṣu nāma-rūpa-guṇa-parikareṣu samyak sphuriteṣu līlānāṁ sphuraṇaṁ suṣṭhu bhavati. tatrāpi śravaṇe śrī-bhāgavata-śravaṇas tu parama-śreṣṭham.*
>
> The practice of *sādhana-bhakti* begins with hearing the holy name, which purifies the heart of the devotee. Thereby he becomes qualified to hear descriptions of the Lord's form, which then gradually wakens within the heart. Consequently the qualities of the Lord progressively arise within the heart. As they manifest fully, the specific aspects of His service and pastimes gradually waken. In this way the holy name reveals the Lord's form, qualities, and pastimes in all their splendor and beauty and in all their different branches.[37]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī also cited Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's similar comments, given in his gloss on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.8.4, that a devotee engaged in *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana* does not need to separately try for *smaraṇa,* for *smaraṇa* is dependent on *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana.* He would also quote from Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's song "Kṛṣṇa-nāma dhare kata bala" (How potent is the name of Kṛṣṇa!):

īṣat vikaśi' punaḥ dekhāya nija-rūpa-guṇa
citta hari laya kṛṣṇa pāśa
pūrṇa vikaśita haña vraje more jāya laña
dekhāya nija svarūpa vilāsa

> When the Name starts to blossom in the heart, He reveals His own spiritual form and characteristics. He steals my mind and takes me to Kṛṣṇa. When the Name is completely manifest, He takes me to Vraja, where He shows me my personal form and role in Kṛṣṇa's eternal pastimes. (*Śaraṇāgati*)

And from his own composition he would cite, *kīrtana-prabhāve smaraṇa haibe:* "The transcendental power of congregational chanting automatically wakens spontaneous remembrance of the Lord and His divine pastimes in relation to one's eternal spiritual form."[*] He explained that apprehension of *līlā* is impossible by any means other than the mercy of the holy name, and that endeavors for *smaraṇa* without *nāma-bhajana* cannot be successful. He further elaborated:

> Those who give up the process of hearing and loudly chanting the holy names as received

from the mouth of devotees who are free from *nāmāparādha,* and to gratify their own senses display artificial semblance of *līlā-smaraṇa* in their impure, enjoyment-prone hearts, in this way attempting to imitate remembrance of the Lord's pastimes, simply increase the thirst for material enjoyment born from aversion to the Lord.[38]

By chanting the holy name all *anarthas* will be removed. Then automatically *rūpa-guṇa-līlā* (the Lord's form, qualities, and pastimes) will be revealed. There is no point in making a separate effort to artificially remember the Lord's form, qualities, and pastimes. The Lord and His name are one and the same. This will be understood lucidly when the coverings in our hearts are removed. By chanting without offenses you will personally experience that all perfection comes from the holy name.

Through chanting, the distinction that exists between the self and the gross and subtle body is gradually effaced, and thus one realizes his own spiritual form. Once aware of his spiritual body, as one continues to chant he sees the transcendental nature of the Lord's form. Only the holy name can reveal the spiritual form of the living being and cause him to be attracted to Kṛṣṇa's form, qualities, and pastimes.

By "service to the holy name" we do not mean just chanting the name; it includes other duties also. By serving the holy name with body, mind, and soul, the direction of that service spontaneously manifests in the chanter's heart, like the sun in the clear sky. What is the nature of the holy name? Eventually all these realizations automatically appear in the heart of one who chants the holy name. The true nature of *harināma* is revealed through listening to, reading, and studying *śāstra.* It is unnecessary to write anything further on this subject. All these things will be revealed to you through continued chanting.[39]

Without *śravaṇa* there is no *kīrtana.* First *śravaṇa,* then *kīrtana.*[40]

Unless accompanied by *śravaṇa* any attempt to perform *kīrtana* must be material. Repeated hearing gives rise to *kīrtana* and *smaraṇa.* By hearing *kīrtana* one begins to perform *kīrtana,* and from performing *kīrtana, smaraṇa* of Hari-*kathā* wakens.[41]

The name of the Lord and the Lord Himself are not two separate entities, but one. When the sound of the holy name passes over the lips, the conditioned sense of hearing and the conditioned consciousness initially process the sound as if it were material, and that is how it is perceived. As a result, only the external ear hears it. Since the other senses and the mind, which is the collector of sensory experience, are envious of the ear, which they consider to be an equal partner, the result is that such chanting does not effect the cleansing of *anarthas*.

We do not have the capacity even to theoretically know that the name and the Lord of the name are one. Yet just as piercing of the ear is one of the Vedic rites for a young child, when our spiritual ear has been pierced by the holy name the other senses give up their envy of the auditory sense. They no longer quibble with the ear, which alone can perceive

transcendental sound. Then the flood of *prema* pours forth from all the spiritual senses and cleans away the contaminants of opposition and malice. Thereafter the Lord's beautiful form, qualities, associates, and pastimes are revealed in the name Himself, and experienced by the chanter as something quite distinct from his previous experiences in the mundane world. Then the kinds of worries and distractions of the mind that are typical of the conditioned living being cannot remain.

We should constantly pray to the holy name for His mercy. A person still filled with *anarthas* should not engage in *smaraṇa* of *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā.* When we learn to hear as we chant, the opportunity to remember will automatically arise. At that time *aṣṭa-kāliya-līlā-smaraṇa* will become possible. There is no need artificially to try for it.[42]

Smaraṇa is possible by the power of *nāma-saṅkīrtana.* The completely manifested name is *aṣṭa-kālīya nitya-līlā.* Realization of the name and service are not attained without *smaraṇa* based on *nāma. Nāmāparādha-kīrtana* is not *nāma-kīrtana.* As the bud of the holy name begins to sprout just a little, the supramundane forms of Kṛṣṇa and His associates become manifest, and when it reaches the flowering stage, the fragrance of Kṛṣṇa's sixty-four qualities is experienced. When the lotus of the holy name fully expands, Kṛṣṇa's *aṣṭa-kālīya nitya-līlā,* although beyond material nature, manifests within this world.[43]

Those who have no material expectation regarding *sādhana* or the goal of *sādhana,* who simply desire to become the servant of Rādhā, the dearest of Madana Gopāla, under the control of the highest inconceivable spontaneous love, chant loudly and without offense the names of Kṛṣṇa, the king of *rasa.* As described in *Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* 2.3.144, those who desire to serve the lotus feet of Rādhā must constantly perform *nāma-saṅkīrtana.*[44]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would cite many sources, particularly *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* asserting the preeminence of *kīrtana* as the prime purificatory activity for Kali-yuga and accessible to all without pre-qualification. He explained that his definition of *kīrtana* as being in and of itself *siddha-praṇālī* was firmly founded in the earliest teachings of the Gauḍīya *sampradāya,* and thus his emphasis on *kīrtana* was for restoring the original and easiest path. He described how *svarūpa-siddhi* arises from sincere chanting:

I was extremely glad to see in your mail the very gist of all the sayings of *śāstra.* After deliberating over the matter in your heart you will realize that precocious thinking born of idleness can bear no actual fruit. We are tiny *jīvas* traversing the path of *vidhi,* yet are not inimical to *rāga. Rāga-kathā* is exalted, but it seems inappropriate that it should come from our small mouths. Hearing such big words from our little mouths, devotees whose life and soul is *bhajana* will laughingly push us away.

Having no idea who Kṛṣṇa is, if a person tries to raise himself onto the path of *rāga,* he exposes his laziness in attempting to raise himself to the highest level; the *mahājanas*

proclaim this at every step.

Śrī Bhagavān (*nāmī*) and the name of Bhagavān (*nāma*) are a nondifferent entity. He who has a conditioned perception of difference between *nāma* and *nāmī* is absolutely required to serve devotees accomplished in *bhajana,* for rectification of his *anarthas.* To demonstrate this, the eternal associates of Śrī Gaurasundara have described the kind of *bhajana* such devotees perform. If we utter the name in parrot-like fashion, people will designate us as *prākṛta-sahajiyās* and thus decrease our self-conceit. But if we want to show all these *prākṛta-sahajiyās,* who are mired in their misconceptions—lamenting like a cow stuck in mud—the real glory of *rāgānuga-bhakti,* we ourselves must become expert in the art of *bhajana,* whereby others may be benefited.[*] So take care to understand these topics well. *Bhajana* is not an external activity, nor for showing off. Loudly call out *nāma;* then the spirit of enjoyment in the form of laziness will not be able to devour us.[45 †]

On Vraja-vāsa and Vraja-vāsīs

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His followers adored the land of Vṛndāvana and its vicinity as the highest *līlā-bhūmi* (place of pastimes) of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, being a nondifferent manifestation of Goloka Vṛndāvana, the vertex of the spiritual universes. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu had declared that to reside in Vṛndāvana is a principal constituent of *bhakti,* and in *Mathurā-māhātmya* Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī had ascertained that to quit one's body in Vraja-*maṇḍala* guarantees entrance into and eternal life in Goloka Vṛndāvana.

Accordingly, many persons had come to live in Vṛndāvana, which was studded with innumerable temples and ashrams. Yet Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura pointed out that various nondevotees also had settled in Vṛndāvana, many for solving their economic problems by becoming beggars. He did not recognize as genuine Vraja-*vāsīs*—but as intruders like Agha, Baka, and Pūtanā—those who entered Vṛndāvana with a deceptive attitude and harbored in their hearts a most malicious spirit of envy toward Kṛṣṇa. He stated that although anyone living in Vṛndāvana is benefited one way or another, the real Vṛndāvana is appreciated only by a pure devotee:

> *Vraja* means "to walk." Anyone always walking the path of satisfying Kṛṣṇa is a Vraja-*vāsī.*[46]

> Vraja-*vāsīs* are all *nitya-siddhas,* are free from illusion, are followers of the principles of Vaiṣṇavism, are simple, and are sincere friends to Vaiṣṇavas.[47]

> To instruct materialistic persons, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu visited Vṛndāvana and took *darśana* of the pastime places therein. Forgetting this, conditioned souls accept Vṛndāvana as their field of enjoyment within the material world and thus rebel against Śrī Mahāprabhu and His teachings. The manner in which *prākṛta-sahajiyās* conceive of the *dhāma* and proclaim themselves Vraja-*vāsīs* or *dhāma-vāsīs* is actually quite different from factual spiritual residence in Vṛndāvana, for by taking it as a place for their sense gratification they make their residence in the material world and increase their material disturbances. This is not the attitude of pure devotees. Even though Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara is an eternal Vraja-*vāsī,* from accounts of his activities it is not heard that he ever visited *bhauma*-Vṛndāvana (Vṛndāvana manifested on this plane). Similarly, there are no authorized documents stating that exalted personalities such as Śrī Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi, Śrī Haridāsa Ṭhākura, Śrī Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, Śrī Śivānanda Sena, Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya, Śrī Śikhi Māhiti, Śrī Mādhavī-devī, and Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita Gosvāmī ever visited Vṛndāvana-*dhāma.*

> Notwithstanding, popular opinion is that many persons devoid of *śuddha-bhakti—prākṛta-sahajiyās, karmīs, jñānīs,* and others with intentions separate from service to Kṛṣṇa—also visit, see, and reside in *bhauma*-Vṛndāvana. Such Vraja-*vāsa* may bestow upon persons devoid of *bhakti* the fruits of going to *svarga,* of *mukti,* or those attained through

renunciation of both sin and piety. But proper and true transcendental Vṛndāvana-*vāsa* is attained by those possessed of spotless spiritual vision, according to the stanza *premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena.*[*]

In the next period [i.e., after Lord Caitanya's disappearance], Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura in Kheturi and Śrīnivāsa Ācārya in Jajigram, and after that Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī in Gauḍa-*deśa,* Śrī Bhagavān dāsa Bābājī in Kalna, Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī in Navadvīpa-*dhāma,* and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in Calcutta, were solely devoted to *śrī-nāma* and certainly did not live anywhere but Vṛndāvana.[48]

Those persons who have developed a strong desire to unceasingly serve the Lord are entitled to go to Vṛndāvana. Foolish persons, situated outside Kṛṣṇa's internal energy and primarily concerned with board and lodging, lack eligibility for entrance into the Vṛndāvana that eludes material vision. Vṛndāvana is not like other ordinary places meant for eating, sleeping, and so on, or for the mundane proclivities of acceptance and rejection. This supramundane land is the eternal place of worship for devotees firmly attached to Kṛṣṇa and free from desire for material enjoyment. Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī set the standard that by taking shelter at Śrīman Mahāprabhu's lotus feet and being empowered by His mercy, one becomes qualified to enter and reside in Vṛndāvana.[49]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would quote Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura's description of perverted Vraja-*vāsa:*

artha-lābha ei āśe kapaṭa-vaiṣṇava-veśe
bhramiyā bulaye ghare ghare

Hoping to collect some money, I disguise myself as a Vaiṣṇava and wander from door to door.

aneka duḥkhera pare layechile vraja-pure
kṛpā-ḍora galāya bāndhiyā
daivī-māyā balātkāre khasāiyā sei ḍore
bhava-kūpe dileka ḍāriyā

After I had suffered much distress, You mercifully took me to Vraja. But Your illusory energy forcibly untied the rope of compassion and placed me back in the well of material existence.[50]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura further elaborated:

Sahajiyās think that by buying a ticket they will go to Vṛndāvana and engage their bodies, saturated with the consciousness of "I" and "mine," in sense enjoyment. This they call Vraja-*vāsa.* And immorality, debauchery, cheating, avoiding service to real Vaiṣṇavas, avoiding chanting the names of the Lord, and seeking fame—this they call Hari-*bhajana.*

> While giving up worship of the Lord's devotees they make a show of living in Vraja. With the material body they try to enjoy Kṛṣṇa. So many sinful persons have mustered together in Vṛndāvana and Navadvīpa. Absorbed in satisfying their senses, they do not understand a single word of the pure Vaiṣṇavas, and instead commit offenses at their lotus feet. Śrī Caitanya and the Gosvāmīs are merciful to those who worship the devotees of Kṛṣṇa.[51]

In a lecture during his last visit to Vṛndāvana, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura noted:

> Bhagavān was present at Śeṣaśāyī for many days, but Śrī Gaurasundara, proceeding there while singing the *Bhāgavatam* verse *yat te sujāta-caraṇāmburuhaṁ staneṣu,* revealed the glories of this place and manifested His dancing *līlā*.* The Gosvāmīs in the line of Śrī Gaurasundara were also ignited by sentiments similar to His. Yet nowadays there is no one here with whom to discuss or from whom to hear such topics.[52]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura once entered Vraja-*maṇḍala* in a manner seemingly calculated to incense the local sadhus: riding in a Jaguar convertible, accompanied by Śrī Paramānanda Brahmacārī and Śrī Kuñja Bihārī, both wearing three-piece suits, with himself in the red of *sannyāsa,* apparently flouting the prohibition against a Vaiṣṇava wearing red. In those days Western dress and vehicles were symbols of considerable wealth and prestige, hardly seen in India except in major cities, and were eschewed by sadhus and others adhering to traditional culture. The self-styled Vraja-*vāsīs* grouched, "This is not the proper way to approach Vṛndāvana. You are spoiling the spiritual ambiance." Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura replied, "All of you are mimicking Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī. I have come not to mimic him, but to serve his actual purpose by reestablishing the genuine, sacred atmosphere that has been disturbed by imitators." He dubbed the Vṛndāvana *bābājīs* as imitators of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, because they only dressed like him yet neither properly understood nor followed his precepts, nor partook of his mission of widely spreading *śuddha-bhakti.*

While visiting Rādhā-kuṇḍa in 1932 Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura heard that a resident *pāṇḍā* maintained, "I am a Vraja-*vāsī* and a *brāhmaṇa.* Raghunātha dāsa, having been born in a low-caste family, honored persons of my stature. Therefore I am capable of offering benedictions to him." He pronounced this on the strength of a prayer by Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī expressing profound respect for Vraja-*vāsīs* and *brāhmaṇas:*

> *gurau goṣṭhe goṣṭhālayiṣu sujane bhūsura-gaṇe*
> *sva-mantre śrī-nāmni vraja-nava-yuva-dvandva-śaraṇe*
> *sadā dambhaṁ hitvā kuru ratim apūrvām atitarām*
> *aye svāntardhātaś caṭubhir abhiyāce dhṛta-padaḥ*

> O mind, I grasp your feet and beg you with sweet words to give up pride and develop intense extraordinary love for my guru, Vraja, the people of Vraja, the *madhyama-adhikārī* Vaiṣṇavas, the *brāhmaṇas* of *daiva-varṇāśrama,* the *gāyatrī* mantra, the holy name, and the transcendental shelter that is the youthful duad of Vraja.[53]

When news of this *brāhmaṇa's* rash solecism reached Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, he became indignant: "Do I have to hear this? This man is controlled by lust, anger, and greed yet says that he can bless the most revered guru in our *sampradāya*!" Rather than directly rebutting the offender, he began a fast, and was joined by the entire group of disciples accompanying him. News of this was relayed to that priest, who was then persuaded to personally beg pardon from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī—who treated him respectfully, accepted his apologies, and then broke fast.*

Later, when Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu asked why he had been so affected by the words of an uncultured ninny instead of merely ignoring them, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura answered, "If I were a *bābājī* I could have just covered my ears and left. But I have taken the role of *ācārya*. I cannot utilize the facilities of an *ācārya,* such as riding in a big motorcar, without discharging the duties of an *ācārya*. I must defend the dignity of our previous *ācāryas* by doing everything within my power to ensure that such aberrations do not continue unchecked."

During another visit to Vṛndāvana, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī called on a childhood friend residing there, but at the time, a caste Goswami was discoursing on *rāsa-līlā,* so Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī simply bowed his head and left. Perturbed, his friend came out to ask why he was going away. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī replied that his guru had taught him that hearing such explanations of *rāsa-līlā* is offensive, hence he was obliged to leave.

Paṇḍita Rāmakṛṣṇa dāsa Bābājī was respected as the most accomplished *siddha-bābājī* of Vṛndāvana. He was known as austere and of good character (he was not a fornicator) and was so exceptionally knowledgeable in the teachings of all Vaiṣṇava schools that learned members of various *sampradāyas* consulted him for resolving complex philosophical points arising within their own tradition. He did not give *dīkṣā* to anyone, yet many *sādhakas* approached him for instruction and a few lived with him just like disciples. He dogmaticly adhered to scriptural rules of *sadācāra* (though not to those given in Gauḍīya *smṛtis* such as *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*) and taught his followers to do likewise. Miracles were ascribed to him, and sometimes he sobbed so profusely, with water exuding from his nose, that attendants on both sides would dry his face with cloths as he madly chanted. He was of *brāhmaṇa* stock and opposed conferral of the *upavīta* upon persons of lower caste.

During a visit to Vṛndāvana in 1922, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had met with Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa dāsa Bābājī and solidly contested his teaching that *kīrtana* is only one of several equal processes of *bhakti,* that modern invented putative *kīrtana* mantras are quite acceptable, and that deep learning in *nyāya-śāstra* is the doorway to Vedānta study and hence a prerequisite for eligibility to discuss spiritual topics.

The *Gauḍīya* 11.14, published on the last day of Vraja-maṇḍala Parikramā, carried an article titled "Vrajera Saralatā o Svābhāvika Sadācāra" (Simplicity and naturally good behavior of Vraja), naming Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa dāsa Bābājī and criticizing him and others for following mundane North Indian Hindu *smṛtis* and thus contaminating the Gauḍīya path with *smārta-vicāra.* Similarly, certain Vṛndāvana *paṇḍitas* had taught *śāstra* to ostensible Gauḍīya *ācāryas*

from Bengal, yet because these *paṇḍitas* were averse to *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata, Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu,* and *Ṣaṭ-sandarbha,* the genuine preaching of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in Vraja was now beset by varied obstacles. In not very oblique reference to Rāmakṛṣṇa dāsa Bābājī et al, the article stated that self-styled religious leaders in Vraja were taking advantage of Vraja-*vāsīs'* simplicity and misleading them, and thus suggested that they deserved state punishment; that persons claiming to be Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas but who placed impediments to the spiritual progress of true followers of Mahāprabhu were actually like the *asuras* Agha, Baka, and Pūtanā; that such persons' considering an inauspicious path auspicious, their venerating *karma-kāṇḍa,* their adjudging pure Vaiṣṇavas as members of social castes, and their abandoning Mahāprabhu's process of *kīrtana* to instead emphasize contemplation and imaginative processes were all *mūḍhatā* (foolishness and rascaldom); and that their replacing of *bhakti-sadācāra* with *karma-kāṇḍīya smṛtis* meant for persons attached to women was *anācāra* (impropriety; antonym of *sadācāra*).

Shortly after completing Vraja-maṇḍala Parikramā, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī suddenly clapped his hand to his forehead, exclaiming, “I am so unfortunate to have traveled throughout Vraja-*dhāma* yet not to have found a single Vaiṣṇava.” His astonished disciples questioned how that was possible, since they had observed many Vraja-*vāsīs* strictly following vows and worshiping the Lord by chanting, reciting *śāstra,* worshiping deities, and performing various other services. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī replied that all such sadhus were simply *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs.* Wanting to understand this apparent conundrum, shortly thereafter Śrīmat Śrīdhara Mahārāja spent some days at the ashram of Rāmakṛṣṇa dāsa Bābājī. By comparing the position of this renowned sadhu with that of his own guru-*mahārāja,* he concluded that the *bābājī* was trying to ascend by mechanically following *śāstra,* whereas his own *gurudeva* was self-evidently in contact with Kṛṣṇa and manifesting His will by delineating what needed to be done in His service under the present world circumstances.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī told how he once asked Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī about specific well-known *bābājīs* in Vṛndāvana who were reputed to be perfected saints, upon which Bābājī Mahārāja simply laughed and said, “All bogus.”

Despite his disdain for unqualified persons claiming to be Vraja-*vāsīs,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī accepted even the insects of Vraja-*maṇḍala* as Vraja-*vāsīs.* When some disciples tried to shoo away flies buzzing around him during a lecture in Mathurā, he said, “These are all Vraja-*vāsīs.* You should not disturb them.”[54] *

Topics of Rādhā-kuṇḍa

In his *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī had ascertained that within the hallowed Vraja-*maṇḍala,* most sacred were Govardhana and especially Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura regarded these as his supreme objects of worship and often expressed profound veneration for them. He revealed Rādhā-kuṇḍa at Caitanya Maṭha and considered a particular pond in Ālālanātha nondifferent from Rādhā-kuṇḍa. He once expressed a desire to reside eternally in Govardhana: "I am not fit to live at Rādhā-kuṇḍa. I shall stay in a less exalted position. My gurus Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and others eternally serve at Rādhā-kuṇḍa. I shall go serve them there, then return to a somewhat lower situation in Govardhana." Similarly, he declared that an upper floor for the domicile of his gurus should be added to the singlestory building at Vraja Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja and that he would stay below, only for the purpose of attending them. He also instructed his disciples not to live independently at Rādhā-kuṇḍa; if they were to reside there it should be only to serve their gurus at Vraja Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja.

Although Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī sometimes stayed at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, he rarely physically bathed there, but generally would offer *daṇḍavat* to, circumambulate, and sprinkle upon his head a little water of this incomparably sacred pond.[†] And he wanted his disciples to follow that example. Ordering them never to place their feet in Rādhā-kuṇḍa, he recommended to instead become *sarvātma-snapanam* (fully immersed) in the Rādhā-kuṇḍa of *bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu.*[‡] Yet in 1935 on Bahulāṣṭamī (the anniversary of the appearance of Rādhā-kuṇḍa), after performing *saṅkīrtana* and *parikramā* of Rādhā-kuṇḍa with accompanying disciples, he bathed therein.[55]

When asked if the Rādhā-kuṇḍa referred to in *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* was geographical or mental, he replied that neither understanding was correct, for Rādhā-kuṇḍa is a fully conscious reality, and that although according to the *prākṛta-sahajiyās* one cannot actually be accepted as a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava without bathing in Rādhā-kuṇḍa, their ostensible dip in Rādhā-kuṇḍa was merely imitative.[56]

> Although there are some good people in Vraja-*maṇḍala,* most who pride themselves on being Vraja-*vāsīs* and regard themselves as great devotees are preoccupied with engaging others to feed them fancy foods and worship their feet. Anyone who can feed them and please them with monetary gifts is acknowledged as a Vaiṣṇava. Seeing that we do not souse in Rādhā-kuṇḍa, which hamstrings their collecting of religious fees, these putative Vraja-*vāsīs* broadcast, "These people don't bathe in Rādhā-kuṇḍa or respect the venerable devotees. What kind of Vaiṣṇavas are they?" Some say that we are Ārya Samājīs, others that we are Brahmos, Christians, or whatever. But it never enters the thick skulls of these so-called Vraja-*vāsī* Vaiṣṇavas that bathing in divine Rādhā-kuṇḍa is not possible with mundane contaminated senses and thus not achieved by dunking a bag of bones and flesh. If they bathe in Rādhā-kuṇḍa without accepting the purport of *ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ,* they will be deprived of Kṛṣṇa's mercy.[57]

Commenting on Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's recommendation in *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* to reside at and bathe in Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura stated:

> *Aprākṛta-vāsa* (transcendental residence) on the banks of *prema*-filled Rādhā-kuṇḍa and *aprākṛta-snāna* (transcendental bath) in her waters, saturated in the nectar of *prema,* means to become wholly aloof from all desires for material sense enjoyment and, up to the end of life, to constantly perform *mānasa-bhajana* (deep meditational worship) with one-pointed submission to Śrīmatī Rādhikā, and after shedding the mortal body, to attain one's eternal spiritual form and intently perform direct eternal service to Śrīmatī Rādhikā. One who actually [in this manner] bathes in Rādhā-kuṇḍa attains this topmost desirable boon.[58]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī referred to Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī as the sole custodian of Rādhā-kuṇḍa.[59] Regarding the spurious *bābājīs* apparently living there, he commented:

> Rādhā-kuṇḍa is protected like a fort by the associates of Śrī Rādhikā, who prohibit persons of contrary consciousness to enter therein. Unfortunately the luckless *prākṛta-sahajiyās* think themselves qualified to reside there, and attempt to pollute the entirely transcendental Rādhā-kuṇḍa with their materialistic ideas. But Rādhā-kuṇḍa is far beyond anything of this mundane world and even more exalted than Govardhana. Hence the ill-fated *prākṛta-sahajiyās* cannot actually live at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, nor touch even a drop of Her sacred water.[60]

In a lecture at Rādhā-kuṇḍa during Vraja-maṇḍala Parikramā in 1932, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura stated:

> All these days we have not spoken to everyone about *līlā*. The reason is that this is our greatly confidential asset, our only objective. You should not mistakenly consider *anartha-nivṛtti* as *prayojana,* for one thus surmising can never enter into *artha-pravṛtti.* Therefore I will begin speaking about *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā.*
>
> I know that even now you are not ready to hear it, yet we should know that such a transcendental ideal exists within the realm of *bhajana.* This is why *anartha-nivṛtti* is essential. After that comes *artha-pravṛtti,* namely, that in the supramundane realm there is service to the divine pastime-couple—without knowing this, all our efforts may end in voidism.
>
> Let those who have chanted *harināma* for fifteen or twenty years hear such matters. Beginners need not hear these topics, for they would misunderstand. These subjects are for *sevonmukha* listeners, not for all. *Āpana bhajana-kathā na kahiba yathā tathā:* "I will not speak here and there, to anyone and everyone, about my *bhajana.*"[*] Disregard of this instruction of our previous *ācāryas* will cause a permanent fall from realm of *bhajana.*
>
> Do not think that *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā smaraṇa* is the property of *prākṛta-sahajiyās;* it is actually our affair. It has to be retrieved from the hands of those cheaters. Our

> guru-*mahārāja* heard these things from Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and in turn revealed to us various esoteric matters. We have heard the last instructions from our *śrī-gurudeva:* "Living in Rādhā-kuṇḍa would be pleasant if you could deliver it from the hands of eleven ungodly men." Perhaps by now eleven has increased to one hundred and eight.[61]

In reply to a person contemplating performing *nirjana-bhajana* on the banks of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī wrote:

> Persons envious of the Lord suppose that Rādhā-kuṇḍa and other such places are for those like themselves. So we wish them well and conscientiously continue with our duties in service to the Lord. Residence at Rādhā-kuṇḍa is obtained by exceedingly good fortune. It is not a suitable place for materialists like myself, who thus being unable to directly reside there, may do so only mentally.[62] *

The *Harmonist* defined Rādhā-kuṇḍa as "the reservoir of all services, expressions of adoration, that Rādhikā and Her damsels constantly offer to their lover Kṛṣṇa."[63]

Explaining the Upaniṣads

While observing Kārtika-*vrata* at Rādhā-kuṇḍa in 1935, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura lectured daily on the *Upaniṣads.* Out of curiosity and considering his reputation as a great scholar and founder of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, at first some *bābājīs* attended, yet upon discovering that he was discussing the *Upaniṣads* they stopped coming. The *bābājīs* were accustomed to esoteric discourses on the intimate pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and some had no interest whatsoever in philosophical topics, rejecting them as inferior. When he heard that they deemed him a *jñānī,* not a *rasika-bhakta,* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura commented that they were living not at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, but *naraka-kuṇḍa.*[*]

Speaking on the *Upaniṣads* at Rādhā-kuṇḍa was undoubtedly a departure from tradition. By so doing Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura indicated that in Hari-*bhajana* first *śruti* (basic Vedic knowledge) must be considered; otherwise, attempting to prematurely understand Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa-*līlā* is simply a disturbance to the divine couple. He did not want to indulge persons bereft of a genuine service attitude, who would hear Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa-*līlā* as a kind of semi-religious entertainment, and would compare his rendition to those of other speakers whom they regarded more accomplished due to such showmen's artificial exhibition of spiritual sentiments.

That Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī disserted on the *Upaniṣads* at Rādhā-kuṇḍa certainly shocked the putative *bābājīs* residing there, who perceived him as determined to do everything opposite to them. His elucidating the *Upaniṣads* at Rādhā-kuṇḍa may seem incongruous with both the spontaneous devotional mood for which one resorts to Rādhā-kuṇḍa and the sweet nectar of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa-*līlā* one expects to hear there, yet to dispel misconceptions about *adhikāra* for approaching Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī expatiated the *Upaniṣads* there. He remained undisturbed and unapologetic if anyone criticized or left, preferring to be freed from the association of such pseudo-devotees. Even earlier, in 1922, Śrīla

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had had Śrīmad Bhāratī Mahārāja recite a similarly foundational topic at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, the section of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describing Prahlāda Mahārāja.[†]

Bhāgavatam Business

> There is no book in the world like *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. But what an irony! What a play of *māyā*! This book of books has been converted to a commodity for trafficking![64]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī considered pecuniary-motivated *Bhāgavata-saptāhas* (week-long recitations of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*) as a blot on Vaiṣṇava society. In imitation of Parīkṣit Mahārāja's hearing *Bhāgavatam* for seven days from Śukadeva Gosvāmī, these were religious-cum-social shows with audiences ranging from a few dozen to thousands. The popularity of *bhāgavata-saptāhas* stemmed from promises that worldly boons were gained by participation therein, and also from narrators' expertise in delighting their audiences. Such ersatz speakers, typically from the ranks of the caste Goswamis, were hardly on the level of Śukadeva Gosvāmī, being neither self-realized nor concerned for the hearers' spiritual benefit. Customarily, attendees presented gifts in cash or kind to the orator, whose narrations were typically delivered in charming showy style, with much poetic, literary, and grammatical frills, to satisfy the senses of the participants and thus elicit profuse donations. Well practiced in the theatrics of their trade, "spontaneously" breaking into song or tears as the plot required, they secured both income for family upkeep and reputation as devotional scholars. Yet Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura heaped opprobrium on *Bhāgavatam* reciters whose charges of ten rupees per hour were, he noted, earmarked either for buying a gun for their sons to shoot birds, or for their own whoremongering.[65] *

Professional speakers generally dilated on sections of the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that portray the esoteric pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa, which are attractive to laymen due to appearing like romantic dealings between ordinary men and women. Inordinately focusing on chapters twenty-nine through thirty-three, which describe Lord Kṛṣṇa's most intimate and exalted *rāsa-līlā,* the pecuniary reciters created the impression that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is a religious text with marked sexual orientation and devoid of serious theology.

Additionally, whatever semblance of *tattva-jñāna* the commercial speakers introduced into their spiel was laced with *smārta, śākta,* and Māyāvāda distortions opposed to the express teachings of *Bhāgavatam* itself, further making a cheating presentation of this scripture which from its very outset stood against cheating.[†] Because the hearers of such skewed recitations were completely unlike Parīkṣit Mahārāja, but instead were willing cooperators in a swindling mockery of the *Bhāgavatam,* the predictable result of their materially motivated hearing of *Bhāgavatam* from an urbane reciter was as they desired: while priding themselves on their piety, they remained inextricably manacled in worldly consciousness and wholly materially attached.

Citing the analogy of hiding a pearl necklace from a monkey, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura protested that a true *ācārya* will never speak on *rāsa-līlā* to the general mass of people. Since the *rāsa-līlā* sequence in the Tenth Canto of *Bhāgavatam* constitutes the most confidential portion of scripture, it is meant for advanced students of spiritual realization. In the *Bhāgavatam* there are

twelve cantos, of which the first nine prepare neophyte hearers for understanding Kṛṣṇa-*līlā* by purifying them from gross mental and conceptual contamination, convincing them of the transcendental nature and imperium of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and waking their constitutional attachment to His pastimes. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura stated that after reading the Tenth Canto one should continue on to the Eleventh, which primarily delineates *bhakti-tattva-jñāna.* He explained that by jumping to *rāsa-līlā,* professional reciters avoid the elaborate philosophical substratum through which the Tenth Canto is to be understood. And without grasping the spiritual status of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, both reciter and hearers are certain to commit offenses at His lotus feet by misconstruing Him to be a materially sensuous person. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura declared that apparent glorification of the Lord by snakelike professional *Bhāgavatam* reciters is merely mundane sound, simply big talk from persons of little substance or character. Even if seemingly sapid, far from enhancing the spiritual prospects of the listeners, such discourses were liable to cause their spiritual death:

> *avaiṣṇava-mukhodgīrṇaṁ pūtaṁ hari-kathāmṛtam*
> *śravaṇaṁ naiva kartavyaṁ sarpocchiṣṭaṁ yathā payaḥ*
>
> One should not hear about Kṛṣṇa from a non-Vaiṣṇava. Just as milk touched by the lips of a serpent yields poisonous effects, a nondevotee's supposed Hari-*kathā* is also poisonous.[66]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī further explained that topics of Kṛṣṇa are like *amṛta* (milk, nectar, deathlessness), but if a poisonous serpent drinks milk, the remnant looks and may even taste the same as ordinary milk but the quality has changed from life-giving nectar to life-destroying poison. He expatiated on the qualifications of a genuine *Bhāgavatam* reciter:

> I read a notice posted by a professional reciter declaring that he would become a street sweeper if thereby he could earn more. Those who do not serve Hari at every moment perform other activities on the strength of *harināma* and thus commit major *nāmāparādha.* One whose life and activities are based on the teachings of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* should serve Hari with every step, every bite of food, and every breath. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is directly the Absolute Truth. It is not an object of business, but is to be served and worshiped. A stipend-holder or contractor cannot explain the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. First of all refrain from approaching the professional priest. See whether he devotes his time fully to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* or not. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is not glorified if coming from the mouth of one who is not a pure devotee and does not center his life on the *Bhāgavatam's* teachings. Such a person cheats himself and others by making a show of *Bhāgavatam* recitation.
>
> The relationship between a *Bhāgavatam* reciter and his audience is not like that between a professor and his students. Whether or not his character is exemplary, a professor who can lucidly explain a lesson to his students is considered expert, whereas a prerequisite to preaching the *Bhāgavatam* is that the reciter must follow the teachings of *Bhāgavatam*. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* states that unless one practices religious principles he cannot teach them to others.

> Simply becoming expert in the *Purāṇas* does not qualify one to speak on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* for *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is not comprehended by those merely possessing academic knowledge of scripture; devotion is required. Whoever lectures on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* should be an actual *Bhāgavata* devotee. Even if renowned as an entertainer, if a person is of loose character, is lusty, full of sensual desires, and craves wealth and fame, he is a far cry from being an authentic *Bhāgavata.* By hearing such a person no one can ever become attracted to the real message of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.[67]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī further delineated the difference between genuine and false hearing of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam:*

> To hear me, one has to give time. After listening for a while, when the mental platform is fully overcome and the knot in the heart fully broken, still various obstacles and internal confusion will remain. People can understand the talks of certain popular speakers because they supply what the senses desire. But topics about Kṛṣṇa do not satisfy the material senses. There is one *Bhāgavatam* speaker who draws such crowds as could never be seen even at a harlot's dance show.
>
> Those who hear nice sounds have their life taken away like deer lured by a hunter's sound. Those who smell pleasant fragrances, who pander to the tongue and senses, and who continue to listen to topics of sense gratification, calling this *Bhāgavata-kathā,* are inviting death; all of them are servants of lust. They neither open nor even see *Bhāgavatam*. Concerned only with technical pronunciation of the syllables, their business is simply eating and wiling away of time in the name of *saṅkīrtana.* They do not give genuine spiritual teachings, and merely posture as if learned and experienced in these matters. As demigod worshipers or impersonalists, they don't realize how both processes are opposed to theism.
>
> Who will speak the absolute truth, and who will listen? Those who run about to indulge their stomach or desires for fame or adoration by women, separate themselves completely from the association of real spiritual persons. Although thinking themselves very special, they are actually fools straying from the correct path. Linguists will say that when one begins to discuss the absolute truth, linguistic expertise cannot be exactly maintained. But language in relation to the absolute truth is independent and not concerned with knowledge of material languages. When one begins speaking in such language that cuts the knot of the heart, they think he is promoting sectarianism.[68]

Quoting *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would refer to two kinds of *vaktā* (speakers) of *bhagavat-tattva: sarāga* and *nirāga.* A *sarāga-vaktā* is rapacious and full of desires for sensual enjoyment; hence his words cannot touch the heart. He causes fiasco in human society by giving instruction without assessing the eligibility of the hearers. A *nirāga-vaktā* (one free from material attachments) is a *parama-bhagavad-bhakta* (superlative devotee of the Lord) and is *sarasa* (adept in relishing *bhakti-rasa* and evoking spiritual emotions in others) and *sāragrāhī.*[*]

One day at the Gaudiya Printing Works in the presence of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, Śrī Sakhī Gopāla Barāl, an immensely rich businessman and occasional listener to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's Hari-*kathā,* praised the charming rendition of a popular *Bhāgavatam* reciter. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī challenged, "*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* particularly expounds topics of *paramahaṁsa* dharma. If one hears interpretations of the *Bhāgavatam* from a person absorbed in sense gratification, he may appreciate the taste of materialistic poesy and literature but that cannot afford him ultimate benefit. One who has properly heard *Bhāgavatam* cannot be avaricious for sensual enjoyment. Only they who have become free from worldly thought can properly hear Kṛṣṇa-*līlā*." Gopāla Barāl then asked, "Can even a speaker upon hearing whose explanations many are enchanted and openly shed tears actually not benefit others?" Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī countered, "After shedding tears, why do they again become attracted to material enjoyment?" Gopāla Barāl was not pleased with this answer, yet Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī never considered masking the true *Bhāgavatam* conclusion, not even to please a potential major donor.[69]

Perspectives on Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

As perhaps the most important Vaiṣṇava since the time of Lord Caitanya, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura rendered immeasurable, unprecedented, and incomparable contributions to Vaiṣṇava dharma. In response to the contemporary powerful prevailing insistence on scientific analysis, he systematically classified spiritual knowledge to make it readily understandable by persons trained in secular empiricism rather than traditional transcendentalism. That he was the first since Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, over two hundred years before, to write detailed and authoritative *śāstrīya* treatises exploring and upholding Gauḍīya *siddhānta,* reflected the non-philosophical state that Mahāprabhu's cult had fallen into.

In addition to his purely philosophical works, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda wrote in a wide spectrum of styles and genres both modern and traditional, and in several languages, in pursuance of his observation that it was necessary to present different kinds of literature with *śuddha-bhakti* admixed "in homeopathic dose." He composed hundreds of songs suitable for the guidance and elucidation of *sādhakas,* thus filling a virtual lacuna in, and profoundly augmenting, the already rich Gauḍīya *kīrtana* tradition that previously had consisted largely of laudatory works or those appropriate only for consummate devotees.

Furthermore, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura rediscovered the birthplace and revived the preaching mission of Lord Caitanya, bringing both to the public's attention. Remaining in the *gṛhastha-āśrama* nearly all his life, he garnered respect for Vaiṣṇava dharma by preaching from the dignified platform of a government servant—itself a sign of the changing times and the need to change with them, for Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana, the initial *ācāryas* of the Gauḍīya *sampradāya,* had been rejected from orthodox Hindu society specifically because, like Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura over three hundred years later, they were servants of a *mleccha* government. Both a visionary and a practical organizer, he utilized the managerial flair and considerable clout he had acquired as a leading governmental bureaucrat to found and promote various Vaiṣṇava societies.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had made propaganda for a more rational, moral, and socially integrated form of Vaiṣṇava dharma than was then current, and even though he spoke against *apa-sampradāyas,* to some extent he also apparently tolerated, mixed with, and even befriended their members. Rather than unsettle those whom he philosophically opposed, he tried to accommodate them and gradually win them around. Even when exposing religious discrepancies, he generally did so in a polite, guarded manner and thus generated considerable goodwill and a renewed respect for the teachings of Lord Caitanya. By his catalytic preaching o f *śuddha-bhakti,* he did much to establish the proper behavioral standard for genuine Vaiṣṇavas and raised many persons to higher levels.

After the disappearance of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, many of his professed followers averred that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had deviated in various ways from the trajectory outlined by him. These critics were headed by Śrī Lalitā Prasāda, a younger brother of Śrīla Sarasvatī

Ṭhākura, and the only other male member of the family to adopt *śuddha-bhakti* as the linchpin of his life.

Lalitā Prasāda assiduously practiced *bhajana* and abided his father's words to the letter, accepting him as an outstanding devotee. Yet his conception of his pure devotee father was enfeebled by his literal adherence to, and failure to capture the inner current of, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda's teachings. Thus he tended to highlight some of the non-absolute directives—for instance, those emphasizing household life. Besides, he perceived Śrīla Bhaktivinoda as merely a mouthpiece of the middling *paramparā* in which he had taken formal initiation, rather than a luminary even among the *mahā-bhāgavatas* recognized by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī as constituting the transparent Gauḍīya *paramparā* that genuinely transmitted unadulterated *śuddha-bhakti.*

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī worshiped Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura as *gaura-śakti-svarūpa* (Mahāprabhu's plenary potency, appreciated in a higher sense to be nondifferent from Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī), as *rādhā-nija-jana* (a personal associate of Ṛādhā), and as *rūpānuga-vara* (the most distinguished of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's followers).[*] He deemed the spiritual status of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura the benchmark for being recognized as a prominent *ācārya* of the *mahā-bhāgavata-paramparā,* and often referred to him in English as "the pioneer of the *śuddha-bhakti* movement in the modern age" (from the Bengali *śuddha-bhakti-pracārera mūla-puruṣa*), and also in Bengali as *śuddha-bhakti-srotāra-bhagīratha,* comparing him to Mahārāja Bhagīratha, who after efforts in previous generations had failed, brought river Gaṅgā to earth to revive his dead forefathers.[†]

As is apparent from *Sajjana-toṣaṇī,* after the disappearance of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī and Lalitā Prasāda cooperated within the Navadvīpa-dhāma-pracāriṇī Sabhā at least until 1917. Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's accepting *sannyāsa* and founding Śrī Caitanya Maṭha was a symbolic declaration of his breaking with the old ways and his embarking on a bold, highly individual course—and quite likely was instrumental in the brothers' conflicting conceptions coming to the fore and precipitating a permanent rift. Certainly Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's taking these two major steps on the same day was not a sudden move, but had been carefully premeditated. Although he was the leading figure within the *sabhā* and committed to its ideals, quite possibly he felt the need to create a separate medium, more accommodating to his dynamism, while retaining the *sabhā* as a secondary organization. His position as *ācārya* of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha was absolute in a manner that it could never have been in the Navadvīpa-dhāma-pracāriṇī Sabhā as then constituted, whose members considered themselves followers of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura; although they highly respected Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī, they could not offer him full allegiance. That Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's followers were all married and hence unable to wholly devote themselves to preaching, further convinced Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī of the need to break with the old and create *brahmacārīs* and sannyasis as full-time missionaries.

Subsequently Lalitā Prasāda became the leader of the majority of devotees purporting to follow

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. However, he fundamentally disagreed with Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī on how to follow their father. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's innovations were never understood or appreciated by Lalitā Prasāda and others. Moreover, the two parties had some serious theological differences, which centered on tracing the guru-*paramparā* of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Lalitā Prasāda placed him in the Jāhnavā-*dhārā* as a disciple of Śrī Bipina Bihārī Goswami.[*] This was technically correct (as Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had accepted *dīkṣā* from Śrī Bipina Bihārī Goswami), but Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī instead stressed the Ṭhākura's connection to a *bhāgavata-paramparā* of perfect Vaiṣṇavas. Among Lalitā Prasāda's profuse writings, which remained largely unpublished, were dozens of essays lobbing various accusations against Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. Lalitā Prasāda's inability to recognize the transcendental preaching purpose of the Gauḍīya Maṭha was apparent in his disdain for Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's having established any *maṭhas* at all, which Lalitā Prasāda conjectured as being contradictory to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's disapproval of founding *ākhḍās*.[†]

In personal dealings the two siblings maintained mutual respect, and in printed responses to criticism from Śrī Lalitā Prasāda and his cohorts Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura did not mention his brother's name.[‡] Yet in reaction to Lalitā Prasāda's mundanely tinged conception of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had an article published in the *Gauḍīya* stating that for those who see Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura as *bābā* (father, or sadhu), there arises a *bādhā* (obstruction) in the attainment of Rādhā.[§] From childhood Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had never looked upon Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura with ordinary filial affection; regarding him as a *mahā-bhāgavata,* he addressed and referred to him as "Ṭhākura Mahāśaya," never "father." Yet as a son should serve his father, and a disciple his guru, from the beginning Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī availed of all opportunity to perform menial services to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, such as fanning him and bringing him water. Reciprocally, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura treated Śrī Bimalā Prasāda as a disciple rather than son, recognizing him to also be a *mahā-bhāgavata.* There was nary a trace of mundaneness in their relationship.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī wrote to one of the purported followers of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura that, far from upholding the Ṭhākura's mission, such persons were actually impeding it:

> That the corrupted seed of Rūpa Kavirāja's *ativāḍī apa-sampradāya* would in course of time be roused among you and bite like an envious snake residing in the cavity of the tree of your hearts to poison the *bhakti* therein, was personally and clearly predicted to me by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura one summer evening in 1915 at Bhakti Bhavan.[*] At that time unfortunate I remonstrated, "They consider themselves your followers. They can never form a group to openly oppose your ideal of service to Godhead. If they try I will pledge my life to resist them." So as not to distress you, till now I had not informed you of this promise. Through your proxy you have already begun such activities. Even up till now, at every step you obstruct the effort to fulfil Śrīla Bhaktivinoda's heart's desire; therefore your kind of *apa-sampradāya* can never have any connection with *śuddha-bhakti* or Ṭhākura

Bhaktivinoda. I have come to loudly and incessantly announce this. If you do not hear me, you will traverse a perilous path.[70 ‡]

Śrī Lalitā Prasāda and his supporters deemed Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda to have been basically an upholder, or at most a mild reformer, of Vaiṣṇava dharma as then practiced. He insisted that far from being the continuation of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda's work, the combative endeavors of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and his followers were in opposition to it, and that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda himself had been unhappy about Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's heaviness directed at many respected devotees.

Yet Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura observed that nearly all who claimed to be Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's followers were only formally or superficially so, for although exalting him, they merely imitated his standard and practice of *bhakti,* with no inclination to actually assimilate the essence of his message. Failing to grasp his higher purpose, they mistook his accommodating spirit to be all in all. For instance, in recommending that Vaiṣṇavas pursue decent family life as a safe position within which to practice Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti* rather than risk entering the renounced order, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was trying to stem the tendency toward immature renunciation and its conspicuous attendant behavioral deterioration; but his less intelligent adherents accepted as a solemn principle that Vaiṣṇavas must be only *gṛhasthas* and never renunciants, and therefore rejected Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's wrenching young men out of their homes with an open call to stake everything in his mass march toward Mahāprabhu's throne. The *Harmonist* explained the rationale behind Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's broad policy:

> The *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* as edited by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda was mainly in Bengali with occasional separate English numbers. The start was with articles on current topics congenial to the harmonic school of religionists, to which were later added original texts of the four Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas* with the object of gradually familiarizing the public with the vocabulary and technicalities of the four schools. Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, as the pioneer preacher of pure devotion in Bengal in the present age, had to serve a public which was at the time unprepared to receive his message in its entirety. Although at that period even his supporters failed to grasp the full meaning of his message, his writings made the general public acquainted with the principles of the Vaiṣṇava religion in the measure of the capacity of each individual.
>
> The professors of Vaiṣṇavism, or the harmonic school, are by tradition divided into three classes according to the quality of their devotion. Those whose devotion is unalloyed are *śuddha-bhaktas.* The *miśra-bhaktas,* the next class, consist of those whose devotion is alloyed. The third class, that of *viddha-bhaktas,* practice a form of devotion which is almost wholly perverted. In the days of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda the number of devotees professing *śuddha-bhakti* in Bengal were very few. His appeals had to be made to the class of *miśra-bhaktas* and *viddha-bhaktas* among whom he found supporters and sympathizers. The *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* of that period did not altogether escape the influence of the views of these supporters. Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, himself the pioneer *śuddha-bhakta,*

found it absolutely necessary to tolerate basically this influence of *miśra-bhaktas* and *viddha-bhaktas* within the movement. By the will of our Supreme Lord the *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* became subsequently strictly the organ of the *śuddha-bhakti* movement, and it is a proof of the fact that Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's object is being carried out that a large number of highly educated and sincere souls have been accepting the principle of *śuddha-bhakti.*[71 *]

That Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's modus operandi differed from that of his father's is incontrovertible, and was addressed in the *Harmonist:*

> Empiric critics have not failed to detect serious discrepancies between the doings and sayings of the editor [Sarasvatī Ṭhākura] and the words and conduct of Śrīla [Gaura Kiśora dāsa] Bābājī Mahārāja and Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda. But such misunderstanding is only one more instance of the failure of the attempt of worldly-minded people to understand the transcendental careers of pure devotees with the resources of their limited misguided judgment.[72]

Among the many sons, disciples, and followers of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, certainly only Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī was sufficiently learned, dedicated, and intrepid to fully carry forward the Ṭhākura's mission, by confronting and dissolving the myriad confusing philosophical misconceptions that threatened to multiply uncontrollably if left unchecked. Necessarily, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's tactics differed from those of his venerable father, for had he not preached so strongly, the goal that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had worked so hard to accomplish—reestablishing *śuddha-bhakti*—could not have been realized. Had Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī not been so forthright, it might have seemed that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's criticism of the *apa-sampradāyas* was a mere difference of opinon and hence there was nothing significantly amiss with them. Had Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī not preached and acted as he did, had he not overridden rather than adjusted to certain social requirements, had he not clearly delineated the difference between *śuddha-bhakti* and both *miśra-* and *viddha-bhakti,* the gains made by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura for pure Vaiṣṇavism would have been wholly commandeered by the *apa-sampradāyas.* Even in Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's presence, various camps of pseudo-Vaiṣṇavas had taken advantage of his lenience and repopularizing of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission. Indeed, his retirement from public life was impelled by the resurgence of the *apa-sampradāyas,* as he himself had revealed:

> Today we are sitting in a *bhajana-kuṭīra* in Śrī Puruṣottama-*kṣetra.* Why have we abandoned the capital of scholarship, the crowded and busy Calcutta, to escape to this far-off place? Many days ago, when we had just started the publication of *Sajjana-toṣaṇī,* our heart was enlivened with hope: the more an unadulterated Vaiṣṇava dharma is promoted throughout the world, the more benefit its people would get. We took up our work with such honest intentions. Many learned *gosvāmīs* and *bābājīs* started coming from all different parts of Bengal to offer help. Several learned impersonalists joined us and, captivated by the beauty of *śuddha-bhakti,* started manifesting pure Vaiṣṇava behavior. On hearing the charming instructions on Vaiṣṇava dharma even mundaners were

enchanted by *śuddha-bhakti.* Those fond of music and song who were previously averse to God now submerged themselves wholeheartedly in the waves of *śuddha* Hari-*kīrtana,* continuously rejoicing at their good fortune. In towns and villages, devotional societies were established one after another. In this way *śuddha* Vaiṣṇava dharma manifested its glories in the hearts of almost every person in Bengal, astounding and delighting all by its natural splendor and sweetness.

Seeing such changes, beyond our boldest expectations, in the life of Bengal, our enthusiasm in preaching *śuddha-bhakti* increased day by day. Unfortunately, at this very point the times and course of events suddenly altered. All those false religions that had hidden themselves hither and thither from the powerful rays of Vaiṣṇava dharma, just as glowworms hide from the rays of the sun, suddenly started crawling out from their hiding places, taking on new forms. Māyāvāda, the dharma of the *asuras* that for the time being had sunk into the abyss of forgetfulness, emerged once again in people's conversations and discussions, this time camouflaged by the words of *smṛti* and having taken refuge on the boat of *brāhmaṇa* scholars' logic.

Following them, Māyāvāda's accomplices, the yogis, appeared both in this country and abroad, causing confusion in the entire religious domain. From the other side, sensualists began causing harm to the world by taking the form of varied pseudo-religious groups such as *sahajiyās, bāulas,* and the like. A few worms swarming in the stool of *pratiṣṭhā* displayed the utmost effrontery by posing before the ignorant public as avatars of Bhagavān. Others took attractive Vaiṣṇava names, decorated themselves with *ācārya* titles, and started promoting non-Vaiṣṇava ideas in the guise of Vaiṣṇava dharma.

Our heart shattered on seeing this drastic turn of events. While we were looking for the cause of what was happening, the following words of Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatīpāda suddenly unfolded in our heart:

kālaḥ kalir balina indriya-vairi-vargāḥ
śrī-bhakti-mārga iha kaṇṭaka-koṭi-ruddhaḥ
hā hā kva yāmi vikalaḥ kim ahaṁ karomi
caitanya-candra yadi nādya kṛpāṁ karoṣi

It is Kali-yuga, and our enemies the senses are powerful. In this world, the path of *bhakti* is spiked with millions of thorny obstacles. O Caitanya-candra, if You do not bestow Your mercy on me today, then being confused, where will I go and what will I do?[73]

Tearfully chanting these words, we reached the place of the Lord's appearance, Śrī Māyāpur, yet even there our sorrow did not subside. Having forsaken our homeland in search of the Lord, we finally came to Śrī Kṣetra, the place of His disappearance. Here we rolled in despair on the golden sands, and then the Lord revealed the following message in our heart:

"O *Sajjana-toṣaṇī*! May thou be in peace. In this *saṁsāra,* the nature acquired by the *jīvas* according to their karma in unlimited rebirths pushes them to assume more karma again and again. As long as they are not fully freed from nondevotional desires, whatever good instruction you give them will bounce off their ears and not penetrate their heart. Thus no matter how well you preach *bhakti* dharma, however much you discuss *bhakti kathā,* due to their karma you will not be able to give them anything substantial; hence nothing will come of all your speeches and discourses. Now hear My command: Stay in the place where after burying My beloved Haridāsa I performed loud *kīrtana.* Reside here and pray for the welfare of the burdened souls by constantly chanting the glories of *śrī-nāma.* Hearing these glories will bring them the *sukṛti* that will give them confidence in the power of the name. This in turn will bless them with faith in *śuddhā-bhakti,* birth after birth."

In obedience to the order of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, the Lord of our heart, here we set up a *bhajana-kuṭīra* where the heaving waves wash onto the seashore.[74]

From the camp of professed followers of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, a most serious accusation against Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was that by promoting *vidhi* more than *rāga,* and failing to present *rāgānuga-bhakti* in the manner of the traditional *ācāryas,* he had deviated from the express teachings of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.[*] Yet Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was clearly dedicated to *bhaktivinoda-vāṇī,* for the first major task he undertook after the disappearance of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was to edit and print the Ṭhākura's unpublished manuscripts, and with the advent of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, he arranged for their widespread distribution. In so doing, he preserved and brought to the world the legacy of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and undoubtedly served *bhaktivinoda-vāṇī* more tangibly than any of his detractors. He further served *bhaktivinoda-vāṇī* by cautiously inculcating it so that it would not be misused or misunderstood in the manner of the professed followers of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda.

Although Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was a unique transcendental personage in his own right, prominently manifest in his personality was the influence of his two main gurus, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī.[*] That these two moons of the Gauḍīya firmament recognized and blessed Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura bears greater significance than dozens of lesser souls' deprecation of him. Indeed, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura himself had in various ways presaged the essence of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's mission: "Great reformers will always assert that they have come not to *destroy* the old law but to *fulfil* it."[75] "Within the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* an abundant crop of evils has sprung up during the last four hundred years. The first and foremost duty of an *ācārya* is to completely uproot those evils. Some person imbued with the power of God will again establish true *varṇāśrama-dharma* in accordance with the divine dispensation."[76] As Śrīla Bhaktivinoda had told Śrī Jagadīśa Bhakti Pradīpa, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī was sent to this world by Śrī Gaurasundara to introduce *daiva-varṇāśrama-dharma* and preach pure *kīrtana* in the society of Vaiṣṇavas.[†] And Śrīla Bhaktivinoda had written:

sarasvatī kṛṣṇa-priyā, kṛṣṇa-bhakti tāra hiyā
vinodera sei se vaibhava

> Sarasvatī is dear to Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti* is his heart. He is the manifestation of Bhaktivinoda's opulence.[‡]

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's endorsement of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī is also evident from his having entrusted to him sacred service to the Yogapīṭha, and by expressing to him his *mano-'bhīṣṭa* and accordingly setting him specific tasks for furthering the movement of *śuddha-bhakti.*[§] Moreover, according to the utterance of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura that "one is known as a true Vaiṣṇava according to the purity and depth of his *bhakti* and also his capacity to infuse *bhakti* in others," it is clear that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī is a topmost devotee.[77] By bringing thousands to the feet of Mahāprabhu and rigidly training them in the principles of *śuddha-bhakti,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī effectively extracted Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's inner purpose and distributed it to human society. His gargantuan endeavors in Kṛṣṇa-*sevā* were doubtlessly not for self-advertisement, as is totally misconstrued by asinine persons, for the very essence of his existence was his heartfelt aspiration to satisfy his gurus, Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Each particle of his being was composed of this desire; his every thought, word, and activity was permeated with *bhaktivinoda-vāṇī.* And he transmitted this mood to his disciples; thus all members of the Gauḍīya Maṭha were steeped in the writ of Bhaktivinoda and understood that the purpose of the Mission was to fulfil the desires of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Furthermore, wherever Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī saw the manifestation of *śuddha-bhakti,* he ascribed to it the presence of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Thus he was in all respects the fitting inheritor of the mantle bestowed by his renowned predecessor.

Yet many hypothetical followers of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura could not comprehend this, for having taken his teachings simply at face value, they had not even slightly internalized them. As Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī explained, "Any sincere person who remained at Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's lotus feet would realize all that he said. But others, who considered themselves either his formal disciples or blood relations, bowing to him from a distance, could not imbibe anything he uttered."[78] Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī elaborated on this point in the *Harmonist* article "Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda."[79]

Bhaktivinoda must be understood through Bhaktisiddhānta, for without *bhakti-siddhānta* there is no *bhaktivinoda.* Any apparent manifestation of *bhaktivinoda* without *bhakti-siddhānta* must be false.

"A Most Dear Associate"

More glorification of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, from the writings of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is an extremely dear associate of Śrī Caitanya-candra. In course of

time, when those who preached the desires of Śrī Caitanya-deva had left this world to enter the Lord's eternal pastimes, the sky over Bengal slowly darkened, being covered by thick clouds of sensual enjoyment and false renunciation. The heavens were obscured and the world was deprived of the rays of light of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *saṅkīrtana.* One by one, the sun, moon, and unlimited stars of that sky faded from view, leaving only the occasional flash of lightning to disrupt the unending pall of ignorance. Almost 350 years after the appearance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura came to illuminate the *Gauḍīya* firmament.

sarva mahā-guṇa-gaṇa vaiṣṇava-śarīre
kṛṣṇa-bhakte kṛṣṇera guṇa sakali sañcāre

sei saba guṇa haya vaiṣṇava-lakṣaṇa
saba kahā nā yāya, kari dig-daraśana

kṛpālu, akṛta-droha, satya-sāra sama
nidoṣa, vadānya, mṛdu, śuci, akiñcana

sarvopakāraka, śānta, kṛṣṇaika-śaraṇa
akāma, anīha, sthira, vijita-ṣaḍ-guṇa

mita-bhuk, apramatta, mānada, amānī
gambhīra, karuṇa, maitra, kavi, dakṣa, maunī

All great virtues reside in the body of a Vaiṣṇava. The good qualities of Kṛṣṇa manifest in His devotees. These transcendental qualities are characteristics of pure Vaiṣṇavas and cannot be explained fully, yet I will try to point out some of the most important. Pure devotees are merciful, humble, truthful, equal to all, faultless, magnanimous, mild, and clean; they are without material possessions and perform welfare work for everyone; they are peaceful, surrendered to Kṛṣṇa, and desireless; they are indifferent to material acquisitions and fixed in devotional service; they completely control the six bad qualities —lust, anger, greed, madness, envy, and illusion; they eat only as much as required; they are sober, respectful, grave, compassionate, and without false prestige; they are amiable, poetic, expert, and silent.[*]

All these qualities of a devotee were perfectly displayed by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura throughout his life of pure devotion. In various ways Śrī Gaurahari, the ocean of compassion, displayed His merciful nature to the conditioned souls. A similar distribution of mercy is seen in the life and work of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.[80]

Jagad-guru Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is one of those spiritual masters sent to this world by Śrī Gaurāṅga-deva for the benefit of its *jīvas.* That great personality who has given everyone an opportunity to know about *śuddha-bhakti* and the guru-*paramparā* is none other than Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. He is dear to Gaurāṅga and is our place of shelter.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura regards *bhakti* as *preyas,* whereas previous *ācāryas* have declared it as *śreyas.*[*] But as *rūpānuga-vara* (the best of the followers of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī), Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has specifically revealed to humankind that *bhakti* is *preyas.* Those who do not consider devotional service *preyas* are godless non-Vaiṣṇavas, devoid of their own ultimate good. Human beings deem sense gratification, fruitive activities, and mental speculation *preyas.* Yet one who adjudges service to the Lord as *preyas* and whose only *vinoda* (pleasure) is in gratifying Kṛṣṇa's senses is the best servant of the Lord, nondifferent from Him, and *jagad*-guru. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura instructed that *preyas* and *śreyas* coincide in *bhakti.* Accepting unmotivated *bhakti* as his primary duty, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura instructed everyone to practice it.

People may say that all paths lead to the ultimate good, but Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura protected human society from such nondevotional propaganda. He never discussed the incomplete, nor did he discuss nondevotional topics. His philosophy is distinct from those who try to reconcile spirit with matter and from persons who state, "If you like *bhakti,* then do it. But I don't—and won't." *Bhakti* and *abhakti* are never the same; pleasing Kṛṣṇa and pleasing *māyā* are not synonymous. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had no love for anything other than *śuddha-bhakti.* Before Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura appeared, the current of *bhakti* was obstructed by the worldly masses. He alone established *bhakti* as *preyas* and made the current of *bhakti* again flow.

My spiritual master is he whose life and soul is Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's teaching. Those who respect the words of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda are also my guru-*varga.* We are under the shelter of that spiritual master who regarded devotional service as *preyas,* the only goal and object of value. We have no relationship whatsoever with those who consider Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, a most dear associate of Gaura, to be an ordinary man. Throughout our lives may we never see the sinful faces of unfortunate persons envious of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.[81]

That Śrīla Bhaktivinoda's devotional status surpassed even that of the topmost demigods, and that he was thus revered by them, was borne out by the following anecdote, often told to his disciples by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, who had heard it from Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī.

While absorbed in a dreamlike state, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura happened to enter the court of Yamarāja, where an assembly had been convened to discuss a question concerning two verses from *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.30–31):

> *api cet sudurācāro bhajate mām ananya-bhāk*
> *sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ samyag vyavasito hi saḥ*
>
> *kṣipraṁ bhavati dharmātmā śaśvac-chāntiṁ nigacchati*
> *kaunteya pratijānīhi na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati*
>
> Even if one is most abominably behaved, if he is undeviatingly engaged in devotional

service he is to be considered a sadhu, because he is properly situated in his determination. He quickly becomes righteous and attains lasting peace. O son of Kuntī, declare that My devotee never perishes.

Yamarāja, one of the twelve *mahājanas* and the lord of justice, who thus was exacting in discerning moral principles; Brahmā, Śiva, and Nārada, who are principal demigods and also are among the twelve *mahājanas;* and many other exalted persons were present, but none could resolve the doubt "To assert that by performing exclusive *bhajana* a person will attain dharma and peace suggests that those states are lacking in *bhakti,* and that unalloyed *bhakti,* the ultimate pinnacle of dharma, is but a means for achieving such ends."

Seeing Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura arrive there, all the demigods rose from their seats as a gesture of respect and then presented their query to him. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura settled the issue by explaining that in this context *saḥ* (he) refers not to the sadhu but to one who, not being bewildered by the apparently abominable acts of a surrendered devotee, still considers that devotee to be a sadhu; he who so considers quickly becomes righteous and attains lasting peace. Moreover, by not attempting to impose standards of worldly morality on a sadhu, he himself soon becomes a sadhu. Upon hearing this conclusive elucidation, the demigods offered obeisance to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.[82]

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda and Līlā-kīrtana

On 16 September 1930 at the Ultadingi Road Maṭha, the octogenarian Śrī Nafar-candra Pal Chaudhuri Bhakti Bhūṣaṇa questioned Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura concerning Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and *līlā-kīrtana.* In response, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura forcefully expounded *prākṛta* and *aprākṛta* perception of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

[Nafar Babu:] When Bhaktivinoda was present, we used to see professional performers render *līlā-kīrtana* every year during the appearance festival of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, and he made no objection to that. So why do you object to *līlā-kīrtana*? Should you not follow the path of the *mahājanas*?

[Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura:] We do not object to hearing and chanting about Hari-*līlā.* The only subject of *śravaṇa-kīrtana* should be Hari-*līlā,* which far removes the ears' unchaste propensity for *śravaṇa-kīrtana* of worldly heros, or for general village gossip. There is no other method for doing that.

[Nafar Babu:] Then in Māyāpur or in the Gauḍīya Maṭha, why do you not hold *pūrva-rāga līlā-kīrtanas* or *kīrtanas* by *padāvalī-kīrtanīyās*?[*]

[Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura:] There is a difference between *līlā-kīrtana* and *kīrtanas* describing *śṛṅgāra-rasa.* A person with *anarthas* can hear *kīrtanas* recounting pastimes such as those of Gaurāṅga, or Kṛṣṇa's childhood pastimes, but if he attempts to hear or sing *kīrtanas* concerning *śṛṅgāra-rasa,* he will produce for himself misfortune rather than good fortune.

[Nafar Babu:] Is there any fault in devotees hearing or singing about this?

[Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura:] Who will distinguish the devotee from the nondevotee? Why should the devotee become subservient to the materialist, to be judged either a devotee or nondevotee? A devotee can perform *kīrtana* alone. Why should he mix with nondevotees and hear *kīrtana* from hired mouths? One should hear *kīrtana* only from the guru. The real devotee thinks, "I will hear nothing except *kīrtana* following in the spirit of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, *kīrtanas* about Gaurāṅga coming in an authorized line, and topics from *Bhāgavatam* made sweet by Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, which have come from the mouth of my guru. The real devotee will never hear *kīrtana* from nondevotees, hired persons, prostitutes, vulgar women, merchants, sense enjoyers, or the common public. One must hear *kīrtana* from superior devotees endowed with similar goals and inclinations. A person derives no benefit by hearing *kīrtana* from materialistic persons desiring money, women, or fame.

[Nafar Babu:] Was Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura not devotional in hearing from the mouths of business-minded *kīrtanīyās,* or in arranging for them to sing?

[Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura:] Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura never once heard the *kīrtana* of businessmen, materialists, immoral persons, or ordinary women. He made those arrangements to destroy the folly of worldly persons fond of rumor and absorbed in sensual affairs, just as hunters use a female elephant to trap a rogue elephant to curb his madness. If out of eagerness to hear such songs, men with uncontrolled ears come to Māyāpur, they will gradually be benefited from the influence of the *dhāma* and devotee association. By unintentionally serving the *dhāma* of Gaurāṅga they can develop a mote of *bhakti.* If these men with uncontrolled ears do not hear such recitations, they will be completely bereft of inclination to the *dhāma* and will not get an opportunity to hear topics of the Lord from devotees. That is why Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura made such arrangements; it was an exercise of his mercy. Yet he was careful that those to whom he sincerely showed mercy should not listen to such materialistic *kīrtanas*. He would tell us, "Beware! Do not go there! Never hear Hari-*kathā* from the mouths of hired persons, common women, or non-Vaiṣṇavas. Hear *kīrtana* only from the mouth of the guru."

[Nafar Babu:] Then did he have two types of preaching, one for the materialists and one for the devotees?

[Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura:] There is no branding a person as mundane or spiritual. Those who wholeheartedly accepted or will accept his genuine mercy and blunt words of truth can be known as spiritual. And those who have accepted or will accept their own sense gratification or convenient philosophy of the moment will be materialists. Concerning *rasa-kīrtana,* he has spoken profusely in *Jaiva Dharma, Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta,* and *Sajjana-toṣaṇī.* Perhaps you have read about this subject in his article "Bhaktisiddhānta-viruddha o Rasābhāsa" (Conflicting mellows and contradictions to the conclusions of devotional service) in *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 6.2:[*]

> In the statements of great devotees there is no *rasābhāsa* or mistaken philosophical conclusions. When singers ignorant of *rasa* attempt to explain it, this ipso facto gives rise

to *rasābhāsa* and erroneous conclusions. Vaiṣṇava philosophy is very deep. Whoever in association of devotees studies for a long time the pure Vaiṣṇava dharma will not be victimized by such contradictions. These materialistic singers do not take devotional association and do not know Vaiṣṇava conclusions, and moreover, have the major fault of being professionals. Therefore their words fall like thunderbolts upon the ears of Vaiṣṇavas.

Although singing and hearing about Śrī Rādhā-Govinda's *śṛṅgāra-līlā* are certainly the main methods of worship and daily practice, it is improper and offensive to sing these pastimes in the presence of ordinary people. Having faith in the words of the *ācāryas, āpana bhajana-kathā na kahiba yathā tathā* (One should not speak openly about his method of worship), one commits offense if he then hears songs of *rasa* from the mouths of materialistic singers who desire wealth and women. When all kinds of people are present, it is suitable to sing the Lord's names and recite prayers and songs describing *dāsya-rasa.* When only pure and qualified Vaiṣṇavas are in attendance, one who is sufficiently qualified may hear songs of *rasa,* and by that hearing he will experience the *bhāva* of his *svarūpa.* In that situation all songs may be recited to the benefit of the Vaiṣṇavas. The practice of holding such recitals anywhere and everywhere, out of pecuniary greed and desire for sense enjoyment, is fully the work of Kali.

[Nafar Babu:] Then did Śrī Bhaktivinoda not practice what he preached? Since he found no fault in professional *kīrtanīyās,* but instead praised them, are his preaching and conduct not different?

[Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura:] Perhaps our contemporaries will say the same about us. Since we do not object to many things, or for a deeper purpose we don't directly forbid them, they will think we approve them. But they will be deceived. Those with their best interest at heart should always remember Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī's words *sajātīyāśaya-snigdha* (affectionate and of the same inclination).[83] * If we are striving for a goal, we approach someone who has achieved it. If we want money we go to a person who has greater funds than ourself; if we go to indigents or persons with less money than we have, they will want to enjoy our wealth and will make us penniless. I will hear from that person who has bound the Lord in his heart with the ropes of *prema,* whose knot of *prema* even the Lord cannot cut, and who engages one hundred percent in serving the Lord. I will hear from my guru, not from insignificant persons. Those who hear will then sing. The offspring become fathers and at the appropriate time beget children. One should not hear the words of those who have nothing in their treasury, or who have bad digestion. If I cannot digest food, I merely make matters worse if I take advice from someone with the same problem.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura engaged these singers for the common people. He himself had no need for them. He was thinking that just as he had performed service to Gaurāṅga and become so immensely wealthy with spiritual happiness, all his acquaintances should share the same good fortune. When among ordinary materialistic people, he in many ways behaved as if one of

them. Understanding their level, he made various skillful arrangements for attracting them to the lotus feet of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. But he told us, “Do not hear from the mouths of persons lacking proper conduct. If your conduct is below par, you should not publicly preach about the Lord. Close the door and preach to yourself.” One must have the eyes to see the conduct of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Many people made a show of associating with him. Although they physically saw his actions and heard his words, they did not actually see or hear them.[84]

Dhūlaṭ

Each spring the concert festival known as Vasanta-gāna (spring songs) was organized in Navadvīpa. Vasanta-gāna was also known as Dhūlaṭ, referring to frenzied rolling on the ground—a description that captured the ambiance of the event. Temples throughout the town, and temporary stages erected in each marketplace, featured gigs exclusively airing Rāi-Kānu (Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa) *līlā-kīrtanas.* Thousands of pseudo-Vaiṣṇavas, mainly from East Bengal, congregated to dollop out exhibitions of supposed ecstasy by sobbing, fainting, whooping, wailing, dancing, and rolling on the ground. Originally attended mostly by illiterate women, Dhūlaṭ gradually attracted educated people as well, who came on the plea of hearing classic works by Vaiṣṇava lyrists such as Śrī Vidyāpati, Śrī Jayadeva, Śrī Caṇḍīdāsa, and Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya. But the compositions of these poets were meant only for highly elevated souls like the authors themselves, because to non-purified ears such literature exactly resembled and gave impetus to mundane licentiousness. Indeed, rumors of sexual impropriety during this festival so abounded that Dhūlaṭ became known as a celebration of carnality.

In an extended lecture Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura substantiated that unperverted singing about Rāi-Kānu is the topmost *kīrtana,* differentiated it from the perverted form broadcast at Dhūlaṭ, and explained the required eligibility to participate in genuine Rāi-Kānu *kīrtana.*[85] He opposed the whole ethos of Dhūlaṭ as artificial, distasteful, and offensive, asserting that far from uplifting one's *bhakti,* hearing such elevated topics by unqualified persons would totally destroy any possibility of devotional advancement and instead dispatch the hearer to hell.

He sent preachers to Kuliyā at the time of Dhūlaṭ to hold meetings featuring actual Hari-*kathā,* to expose pretentious pseudo-devotees who try to drag spiritual *rasa* down to the gross sensual platform. The Gauḍīya Maṭha's sustained propaganda against this festival of turpitude culminated in the definitive essay “Vasanta-gāna,” in a January 1923 issue of the *Gauḍīya.*

Compassionate Belligerence and Genuine Humility

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu had immortalized humility as the cornerstone of His teachings:

> *tṛṇād api sunīcena taror api sahiṣṇunā*
> *amāninā mānadena kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ*
>
> Only one who is humbler than a blade of grass, more tolerant than a tree, and does not expect to be respected but always respects others can constantly glorify Hari.[86]

Among Bengali Vaiṣṇavas, humility was ranked as the prime symptom of the saintliness so much esteemed in the highly religious culture of India—hence the curious phenomenon of persons quite lacking genuine humility deliberately mimicking meekness to attract praise and respect. Typically, *prākṛta-sahajiyās* were well practiced in making shows of treacly humility, and deemed such displays the main lineaments of a Vaiṣṇava, even if the performer's personal habits were abominable. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura declared as outright deception these sanctimonious caricatures of piety, maintaining that such religiose impostors were concealing huge mountains of pride within their hearts. He described *prākṛta-sahajiyās* as "hellish living incarnations of cheating humility."[87] He noted that "a mere show of humility will not work, for only after duplicity has been given up can there be *bhakti,*"[88] and that "*bhajana* actually begins when one's outside and inside are the same."

He emphasized the necessity of *tṛṇād api sunīcatā* in preaching:

> If I proclaim myself superior to others, no one will listen to me. They will slap me in the face and knock me off my pedestal. If I am not predisposed to respect others, then I should not tell them about the Supreme Lord. If the only goal of my life is to serve the Lord, then I should not humiliate or disrespect anyone. If the world belongs to the Lord, then I should know my relationship to His world.[89]

To his disciples gathered for his *Vyāsa-pūjā* in 1933, he expressed his own genuine humility:

> At times the thought strikes me that all persons are serving Hari, only I myself am left out. At other times I wonder whether the world abounds with extremely cruel persons who refuse to employ me in the service of Hari by noticing my weakness. Perchance there be many persons for tending my diseased body and mind. But there are very few persons who are prepared to help me in serving Hari. Fifty-nine years of my life have passed away. Numberless persons have blessed me, desiring that I may live my full sixty summers in this world. But I have not been able to serve Hari. If I would have served Hari many persons of this world would have been in a position to reciprocate and might have thereby helped me to be happy. I have failed to be humbler than the blade of grass and more forbearing than the tree. I am not able to chant the name of Hari twenty-four hours out of the twenty-four. I have wasted a good deal of time for resting myself. I often try to

practice the service of Hari, but in lieu of the service of Hari the active desire for enjoyment of the things of this world engross me. I am busied with the thought that the world is missing the service of Hari. But I have no attention to devote to the fact that I myself have missed altogether the service of Hari.[90]

He offered a uniquely meaningful definition of Vaiṣṇava humility:

> The transcendental conception of thinking "I am dust at the lotus feet of my spiritual master; I am the servant of guru and Kṛṣṇa" is what is meant by *tṛṇād api sunīcatā* (becoming lower than grass). *Jīve dayā* (compassion toward all living entities), *nāme ruci* (taste for the holy names), and Vaiṣṇava-*sevā*—these are Mahāprabhu's three teachings. The meaning of *tṛṇād api sunīcatā* is not disingenuousness, merely flaunting a show of humility; it means actual eligibility for *kīrtana* by *nāme ruci* and considering oneself a servant of the holy name. Service is the gateway to *nāme ruci;* service to guru and Vaiṣṇavas is *tṛṇād api sunīcatā.* We should not become subordinate (*nīcatā*) to nondevotees, but to devotees, from whom we should beg mercy and show respect. The *mahājanas* instructed us not to display humility before everyone. To show humility toward envious atheists like Rāvaṇa and the pretentious *brāhmaṇa* is not Vaiṣṇava-*sevā* or *tṛṇād api sunīcatā*.[*] If we transgress this instruction we will never become qualified to chant the holy name or attain *nāme ruci;* rather, our actions will result in becoming envious of others. Rāma-*bhakta* Hanumān's burning of Laṅkā is real *tṛṇād api sunīcatā*.[91] [†]

Just as properly situated Vaiṣṇavas could not fathom how persons addicted to flesh-eating, copulation, and intoxicants presumed to identify themselves as devotees of Kṛṣṇa, self-declared *rāga-bhaktas* were unable to reconcile Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his followers' presenting themselves as votaries of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the apostle of love, while consistently lambasting others and "blaspheming" even other Vaiṣṇavas. An inherent tenet of Vaiṣṇava culture was avoidance of Vaiṣṇava-*aparādha,* as repeatedly and graphically warned against in seminal Gauḍīya literature, especially *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* and *Śrī Bhakti-ratnākara.* But misapplication of such caveats had largely contributed to the disastrously nondiscriminatory concord within contemporary Vaiṣṇava dharma, whereby arrant scoundrelism was flourishing in the name of *bhakti.* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's bluntly pointing out their chicanery was adjudged by deluded *prākṛta-sahajiyās* as most reprehensibly arrogant, envious, narrow-minded, sententious, and exclusivist, in contrast to the liberality, broad-mindedness, and all-embracing compassion of the Mahāprabhu whom he claimed to represent. Thus they rejected Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura as unqualified to be a Vaiṣṇava.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would respond that real humility is inseparable from adherence to truth, and that it is the duty of Vaiṣṇavas to state the truth and caution truth-seekers that epigones are not and could never be actual Vaiṣṇavas.[‡] He likened those supposed devotees who accused him of non-Vaiṣṇava behavior to a fleeing robber who points to other people while repeatedly calling out "There goes the thief!"—thus creating confusion and deflecting attention from himself.[92] Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī further instructed that mere expertise in

histrionics and theatrics can never substitute for *saralatā* (simplicity), which he declared to be the first qualification of a genuine Vaiṣṇava, and that for a person not factually detached from material activities to fraudulently advertise himself as an advanced devotee is a severe infraction of the principles of Hari-*bhakti.*[93]

In a parallel vein was Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's answer to Śrī Nitya-sakhā Mukhopādhyāya, his host in Balasore in June 1918, who had aired a doubt: "Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura's statement *se sambandha nāhi yāra, bṛthā janma gela tāra, sei paśu boro durācāra:* 'He who does not have that relationship (with Lord Nityānanda) has taken birth uselessly; he is an animal and a great rascal' (from *Prārthanā*); and Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura's *eta parihāre o ye pāpī nindā kare/ tabe lāthi māroṅ tā'ra śirera upare:* 'I kick on the head any sinful person who disregards the glories of Lord Nityānanda and dares criticize Him' (Cb 1.9.225); and similar passages seem averse to the spirit of the *tṛṇād api sunīcena* verse of Lord Caitanya."

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura explained with reasoning and scriptural evidence that those statements do not contradict *tṛṇād api sunīcatā,* for they not only demonstrate the highest kindness by attempting to reform atheists, but moreover represent the ultimate manifestation of devotion. Being pure-hearted and non-envious, Vaiṣṇavas never manifest malice toward anyone, so their display of *'krodha' bhakta-dveṣi-jane* (anger toward those malicious to devotees) is aimed at the holy activity of bestowing mercy upon atheists.[94 *] Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura adduced that the very speaker of the *tṛṇād api sunīcena* verse, Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself, on several occasions had exhibited livid wrath toward offenders of Vaiṣṇavas, to wit, Devānanda Paṇḍita, Gopāla Cāpāla, and Jagāi-Mādhāi; that the recognized authority on Śrī Caitanya's teachings, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, within his explication in *Bhakti-sandarbha* of the purport of *tṛṇād api sunīcena,* had cited the behavior of Satī to exemplify that when a devotee is blasphemed, another Vaiṣṇava should not remain dispassionate but should unreservedly express ire; and that in igniting Laṅkā, Hanumān upheld rather than transgressed the spirit of *tṛṇād api sunīcatā,* for his motive was to reveal the might of Rāma imparted to His devotee, whereby on His behalf even an unaided follower could single-handedly shatter the abode, tranquility, and pride of His enemies.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī concluded that when Viṣṇu or a Vaiṣṇava is insulted or dishonored, those who aspire to be their servants are obliged to respond with anger. Although generally deemed undesirable, anger is a latent attribute in every living being and laudable when directed against persons envious of the Supreme Personality of Godhead or His devotee. The anger of a nondevotee is born from hindrance to his sensual desires and thus certainly reprehensible, but the anger of a Vaiṣṇava, which arises when the Lord's happiness is impeded either by blasphemy or similar mistreatment of Him or His devotees, is glorious. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī expanded this topic in his commentaries on *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* 1.17.154–58 and 1.9.225:

> The community of arrogant persons will take millions and millions of births to understand Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura's causeless mercy. Until their offenses are exhausted they will

never have the opportunity to receive a kick on the head from the sanctified all-auspicious feet of a pure Vaiṣṇava. Even the genuine desire for receiving the non-duplicitious mercy of a pure Vaiṣṇava is a rare commodity for ignorant or sinful persons, pious fruitive workers, or mental speculators. *Jīvas* who are averse to Hari-guru-Vaiṣṇavas have not accumulated sufficient piety in previous lifetimes, nor have thousands of their forefathers accumulated sufficient piety, to qualify to receive all-auspicious kicks from the ultimate-benefit-awarding, pure, extramundane lotus feet of Ṭhākura Vṛndāvana. Should dust from a pure Vaiṣṇava's lotus feet fall on the head of a sinful person, at that very moment he will be freed from all material contamination and deceit and thus become a proprietor of the bonanza of *bhakti.*

While Śrīla Ṭhākura Vṛndāvana, who is a Vaiṣṇava *ācārya,* the direct avatar of Vyāsa and servant of Śrī Nityānanda, enacts his pastime of transcendentally kicking offenders, if even one particle of dust falls on the head of a fortunate blasphemer he will positively achieve auspiciousness, in other words, his *anartha-nivṛtti* is guaranteed. The exhibition of such great compassion by Śrī Viṣṇu or Vaiṣṇavas is beyond the imagination or intelligence of foolish nondevotees, who cannot discriminate between what is favorable or unfavorable for their own welfare. The all-auspicious endeavors and behavior of preachers and practitioners of *śuddha-bhakti* to Gaura-Kṛṣṇa who follow in the footsteps of Ṭhākura Śrī Vṛndāvana, the direct avatar of Śrī Vyāsa, display, on one hand, gross punishment of the fallen averse living entities, and on the other, subtle unlimited compassion for them.

On another occasion Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī gave even further elucidation of this enigma: by proposing to violently chastise them, Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura had hewed a path and given an opportunity to puffed-up atheists who would otherwise be ineligible to receive Mahāprabhu's mercy. As when a boy offends someone his father must intercede, if Śrī Vṛndāvana dāsa were to so severely mistreat someone then Mahāprabhu would be obliged to give that person special attention.

Elsewhere Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī declared that anger shown toward *bhakta-dveṣi-jana* is a type of *bhajana,* that persons who consider such an act of *bhajana* the same as common anger are hellish, and that to claim oneself a servant of the Vaiṣṇavas yet tolerate insults toward the guru is not only a sin, but also an offense that causes ruination in spiritual life.[95] He also stated that Hari-*bhajana* is not possible unless one behaves angrily toward persons envious of Hari-guru-Vaiṣṇavas.[96]

When teaching *jyotiṣa* in his youth, many of Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's students had been his contemporaries, whom he had treated familiarly, even allowing them to sit on the same level as himself. In December 1918, when Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura visited Bongaon, a lawyer who had formerly studied *jyotiṣa* under him at the Sārasvata Catuṣpāṭhī came to meet him. Not considering the present status of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the lawyer was about to sit next to him on the same seat, but a disciple swiftly spread his own *cādar* for Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to sit on, to fulfil the etiquette that a superior should sit above those socially inferior. The lawyer

then complained, "We always sat on the same level, so why differentiate now? He is not objecting to my sitting here, so why are you making a distinctive arrangement? Isn't it against Vaiṣṇava principles of modesty and respectfulness to sit higher than others? In my opinion we should be liberal, honoring the Vaiṣṇava guru and the non-Vaiṣṇava equally." Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura remained silent, yet his disciples disabused the lawyer with scriptural statements and reasoning.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī revealed that all truths of *sambandha, abhidheya,* and *prayojana* are encapsulated in the *tṛṇād api sunīcena* verse. He himself embodied the description of a pure devotee as *'sarvottama' āpanāke 'hīna' kari māne,* "topmost, yet regarding himself fallen and base" (Cc 2.23.26).[97] He explained, "Although Vaiṣṇavas are superlative, they rate themselves inferior to straw. Actually they are not fallen or low, but objects of respect even by Bhagavān. Devotees are qualified to be worshiped and honored by all."[98] He expressed his personal humility and simultaneous anger at false devotees for their implicit insulting of Vaiṣṇava gurus:

> I am small, unlearned, despicable, more sinful than Jagāi and Mādhāi, abominable, and a fallen *caṇḍāla,* but my gurus are the best of the best. By making a show of humility while internally cultivating extreme pride, *prākṛta-sahajiyās* wish to declare our guru-*varga* fallen and lowly.[99]

Further impugned by deluded *prākṛta-sahajiyās* that to write books or initiate numerous disciples constituted turgescent flouting of the principles of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī countered:

> Śrī Rūpa, Śrī Sanātana, Śrī Jīva, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa and other direct associates of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu contributed instructions by writing books. Similarly, Śrīman Narottama, Śrīla Madhva, Śrīla Rāmānuja, and others accepted many disciples. But many foolish people consider these activities contrary to the practices of *bhakti* and as another phase of materialism. Such offenders to the lotus feet of genuinely selfless devotees should consider Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's instruction to preach, and giving up the petty pride of considering themselves humble and meek (by not attempting to rectify persons inimical to Hari), should become actual followers of Lord Caitanya. In doing so they would also develop their own *bhajana;* this indeed is the main instruction of Gaurāṅga in his role as the universal guru and *ācārya.*[100 *]

Prākṛta-sahajiyās were not the only ones whose sensibilities were jarred by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his men. Replying to objections from suave empiricists, Professor Sanyal demonstrated that it was in fact they, not outspoken devotees, who lacked humility:

> Those who suppose that it is against the principle of humility to oppose the untruth or neglect to vindicate the truth are emissaries of the deluding power. The attitude of humility is to be practiced by all means, because we cannot know the truth by our own unaided effort. Empiric knowledge errs by ignoring this basic principle of spiritual conduct. By

submitting to empiric knowledge, not humility, but insolence in its undiluted form, is practiced. Those who are loyal servants of the truth are necessarily opposed to empiricism, which is verily the embodiment of insolent denial of the supremacy of the truth. To deceive themselves as well as their victims, worldly people practice this masked insolence in the name of humility. But it should be easy to distinguish between true humility and the counterfeit ware. The uncompromising assertion of the principle of real humility is to be found in the resolve not to tolerate any of those countless insincere shifts devised by suicidal worldliness, under the connivance of empiric knowledge meant for ruining humanity by masking them in the borrowed phraseology of godliness.

The arrogance of the Lord's devotee is thus the perfection of true humility. Those who recognize this are freed from the fetters of the deluding energy, inasmuch as they are thereby proved to have no interest of their own as against the truth. Those who can be angry with the unconditional follower of truth are necessarily enthralled by empiric untruth, which always differentiates the external conduct and internal motives. Yet a votary of truth is always necessarily above this kind of duplicity. Such is realizable only by those who are wholly sincere.[101]

The servant of the guru has no other means except following in the footsteps of Śrīman Mahāprabhu and Prabhu Nityānanda under the guidance of Śrī Guru. He is unable to act in accordance with the tastes and nature of the bound *jīva* thereby disobeying the injunctions of the guru and of the scriptures. This constitutes his proper function of honoring others. In such conduct there is no deficiency of the quality of humility that is greater than that of a blade of grass. This is the humble submission of the servant of the servants of the guru.[102] *

Bhāgavata-paramparā

Caste Goswamis and *bābājīs* rejected Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's tracing his line of *paramparā* through various gurus not connected by formal *dīkṣā*.* His opponents declared that because he did not recognize or respect the Advaita-*parivāra* lineage of Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī, his claim to be Bābājī Mahārāja's disciple was invalidated. Furthermore, since Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī had never used a *japa-mālā* and had not given one at the time of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's "initiation," that "initiation" was therefore invalid. The implication was that since Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had not actually received *pāñcarātrikī dīkṣā* from Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī, how could he confer it upon others? Nor had his *dīkṣā*-guru worn a *brāhmaṇa* thread, so on what authority did he wear one? And since he professed to be a follower of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who was initiated by the *jāta-gosāñi* Bipina Bihārī, why did Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura not accept guru-*paramparā* by seminal descent? Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had imparted to him a Nṛsiṁha-mantra for deity worship, yet Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura gave Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *pāñcarātrika* mantras to his disciples. From whom did he derive this mantra and on whose authority did he distribute it? Also, since he was a sannyasi without a *sannyāsa*-guru, how could he give *sannyāsa* to others?

A similar controversy was over the Gauḍīyas' claimed connection to the Mādhva *sampradāya.* In *Prameya-ratnāvalī* (1.7), Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa had traced the Gauḍīya *paramparā* from Kṛṣṇa to Brahmā to Nārada to Vyāsa to Madhva, then through the Mādhva line to Mādhavendra Purī, Īśvara Purī, and Śrī Caitanya. In *Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā,* Śrī Kavi-karṇapūra upheld this succession, which however was disputed not only by certain Mādhva and other scholars, but even by persons identifying themselves as Gauḍīyas. In reply to all such accusations, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī did not enter into protracted bickering but simply explained the conception of *bhāgavata-paramparā,* or *śikṣā-paramparā,* based on those *bhāgavata* devotees fully attuned to the message of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam:*

> The characteristics on which Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī relies for establishing the superiority of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* have led him to mention as authorities also Brahmā, Nārada, Vyāsa and in their company Śukadeva and also the scriptures proved as authoritative by Śrīman Madhvācārya the spiritual preceptor of Vijayadhvaja, Brahmatīrtha, Vyāsatīrtha, etc., of a later period. From these statements it appears that the Śrī Brahma *sampradāya* is the undoubted preceptorial channel of the servants of Śrī Caitanya. In conformity with this Śrī Kavi-karṇapūra Gosvāmī has firmly laid down the preceptorial line in his work *Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā.* The author of the commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra,* Śrī Vidyābhūṣaṇa, has also adopted the same succession.*

Although traditionally a *sampradāya* was understood as a line of succession based on transmission of *dīkṣā*-mantras, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī stressed that the essence of *dīkṣā* is the imparting of transcendental knowledge:

> *divyaṁ jñānaṁ yato dadyāt kuryāt pāpasya saṅkṣayam*

tasmād dīkṣeti sā proktā deśikais tattva-kovidaiḥ

Those who are expert in *śāstriya* truths state that *dīkṣā* is the process by which *divya-jñāna* (transcendental knowledge) is imparted, and which causes total destruction of sinful reactions.[103]

Thus, the life of the *paramparā* is preserved by *mahā-bhāgavatas* who embody the essence of scriptural knowledge. Substance has precedence over form; the essence of *paramparā* is the communication of transcendental knowledge, not merely a roster of contiguous names. *Bhāgavatī-dīkṣā* takes place when a highly qualified person becomes enlightened by hearing from a *mahā-bhāgavata*; no other formalities are required, for the purpose of *dīkṣā* has been fully served. For example, when Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī recited *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* among the many persons present, only Mahārāja Parīkṣit and Śrīla Sūta Gosvāmī are known to have achieved the full benefit of hearing and thereby becoming capable of explaining *śāstra* in a manner that fully reveals spiritual reality, which Śrīla Sūta Gosvāmī later did by repeating *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* at Naimiṣāraṇya. Ergo, *paramparā* actually exists in the personages and words of *mahā-bhāgavatas,* and on that basis the *paramparā* continuing after Śrī Caitanya is to be recognized. The *bhāgavata-paramparā* does not necessarily deny formal *dīkṣā* relationships but places more importance on the lineage traced through prominent spiritual teachers. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī asseverated:

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is Kamala Mañjarī, a personal associate of Rādhārāṇī. He directed me to establish *daiva-varṇāśrama*. I must obey his order. An *ācārya* is not under *śāstra.* He can make *śāstra*.[*] Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, the *ācārya,* has inspired me in various ways. By his mercy and that of Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja and previous *ācāryas,* we are going on, not caring for the precise technicalities of *smārtas*.[†]

Although this presentation of *bhāgavata-paramparā* appears to be new, it is based on essential understanding of scripture. Anything novel given by an *ācārya* but founded on *śāstra* is called *vaiśiṣṭya* (a special characteristic). *Ācāryas* Rāmānuja and Madhva apparently introduced new ideas, yet because those were grounded in *śāstra* they came to be accepted. *Phalena paricīyate:* "An action should be judged by its result." The level of *bhajana* and the preaching activities of the Gauḍīya Maṭha speak for themselves. Owl-like persons cannot see this, but the honest will acknowledge it.[104]

The *Harmonist* concluded:

Those who deny this line of preceptors are the greatest enemies of the followers of the feet of Śrī Caitanya. There cannot be the least doubt of this.[105]

Preventing Sahajiyā-ism Within

While blasting *apa-sampradāyas,* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was equally concerned that atavistic tendencies toward *apa-siddhānta* not seep into the Gauḍīya Maṭha. Since most recruits were from a background of corrupted Vaiṣṇava dharma, he was afraid that their old misconceptions would resurface. So although he sometimes spoke of the highest levels of devotional accomplishment, he forbad his disciples to pry into topics beyond their platform of realization. He explained that the position of *prākṛta-sahajiyās* who are outside is known—they do not follow correct *siddhānta* or an authentic *ācārya*—and thus their association can be avoided, but if his disciples were to covertly adopt the ideas or attitudes of such *sahajiyās* while purporting to follow a bona fide *ācārya,* they would be even more dangerous than known *prākṛta-sahajiyās,* for thereby they would mispresent the Gauḍīya Maṭha and lend its authority to their deviation. Thus Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura did not tolerate *anadhikāra-carcā,* the discussing of or preoccupation with topics beyond one's spiritual realization.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī instructed that to consider non-Vaiṣṇavas to be Vaiṣṇavas constitutes a serious offense that creates bewilderment in Vaiṣṇava society. He wanted his disciples to clearly distinguish between devotees situated in both the *vicāra* and *ācāra* of *śuddha-bhakti* and persons who, whether from lack of suitable guidance or due to ill intent, were merely performing a show of *bhakti* far deviated from the ideal exemplified by Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Time and again he advised his disciples that neither out of sentiment nor social nicety should they mix with pseudo-devotees, for even millions of years of associating with pretentious persons would never benefit anyone—because however much such imitators may speak of *prema,* their words lacked actual substance, as *prema* is attainable solely by following the process given by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, beginning with primary faith and gradually developing through stages.[*] He repeatedly stressed the need to hear from reliable devotees and not charlatans. Lecturing in 1936 on a verse from *Śrī Gīta-govinda,* he stated:

> Such topics that I am propounding are not heard at the presently manifest Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa. This subject is so vast that we are exceedingly slow to comprehend it. Adjudging me to be not of their class, the *prākṛta-sahajiyās* at Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa have extensively plotted against my having a place there. Be careful, most careful, about hearing Kṛṣṇa-*līlā* here and there. A disciple of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura can never listen to lectures of *sahajiyās.* Can *prākṛta-sahajiyās* speak about the Lord? A gentleman does not partake in such inferior recitations. In that venue there will be descriptions only of the crudest type, with no glint of authentic Hari-*kathā.*
>
> Having quit material topics I am concentrating on spiritual affairs. Hearing this discussion of mine, many so-called Vaiṣṇava householders will become angry, but I do not fear that. Since no topic is more important than this, I am asserting it very strongly. I have no desire to hear anything else or make anyone hear anything else, or to say anything else or make anyone say anything else. Only this *kathā* should always be heard and spoken of. Listen, listen, with all your senses; listen for all time. The *kathā* of the Vaiṣṇava householder and

that of the ordinary householder are not equivalent. One should understand the difference between mundane and spiritual affairs. Giving up *prākṛta-sahajiyā* topics, you should be eager to know the genuine topics of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.[106]

Nevertheless, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī observed that despite his best endeavors, inevitably some false sadhus within the Gauḍīya Maṭha would misuse his teachings and the name and activities of the Gauḍīya Maṭha to maintain their petty sense gratification:

I am aware that some who are unable to be fully initiated into total forswearing of personal desires and acting solely for the fulfilment of Kṛṣṇa's transcendental desires, being unprepared to accept this principle, will fall from the path. They will choose to undertake the *bhikṣā* meant for preaching Kṛṣṇa-*kīrtana* as a means for collecting supplies for personal sense indulgence, adopting the dress and begging of sadhus simply to make a living. But I have loudly made it known that they do not belong to the Gauḍīya Maṭha; at no time have they had concourse with the Gauḍīya Maṭha. They came to give up *anyābhilāṣa* and were undoubtedly given a golden opportunity to fully renounce all contaminated undertakings, which due to ill fortune they are unable to accept.[107]

Vaiṣṇava Śrāddha

According to pan-India *smārta* belief, departed souls were prone to become *pretas* unless their descendants performed the elaborate series of observances constituting *śrāddha,* the central feature of which was to offer food to one's progenitors. These rites were to be observed each month for a year following a person's departure, a fixed number (specific to one's caste) of days after the death, and thereafter annually, with the aim of elevating deceased forefathers to Pitṛloka, a higher planet suitable for material enjoyment. From the time of death until the performance of *śrāddha,* members of the family were deemed *aśauca,* ritually impure. During this period they were prohibited from all religious acts such as entering temples or even performing *arcana* at home. They would exhibit signs of mourning, such as males shaving their heads and keeping their *śikhās* untied, and women opening their tresses.

Within Bengal, *śrāddha* undertaken according to Raghunandana's *smārta* edicts included offering flesh to the ancestors and conducting *śrāddha* on Ekādaśī, in contravention to *śāstrīya* injunctions forbidding consumption of grains, even Viṣṇu *prasāda,* on that day. Hence all who participated in such *śrāddhas* simply created a hellish destination both for themselves and the previous generations they intended to benefit. Eager to be invited to *śrāddhas* to be well fed and to collect the stipulated monetary offerings thereat, *smārta-brāhmaṇas* had so successfully propagated the necessity of such *śrāddha* that even persons considering themselves orthodox Vaiṣṇavas were under the impression that they were bound to perform it.

Belief in *preta-śrāddha* was so deep that even certain claimed descendants of Śrī Advaita Ācārya would annually burn a straw effigy of Him, as if He, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, had to be delivered from ghostly birth. Fully committed to and contaminated by *smārta-vāda,* these professed descendants of Śrī Advaita Ācārya were mindlessly perpetrating such an appalling offense—all the more ironic because Śrī Advaita Ācārya was famed for having demonstrated the glory of Vaiṣṇavas over mundane *brāhmaṇas* by having given the *śrāddha-pātra* (food offered to the forefathers) to Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura.*

Considering observance of *śrāddha* and other rituals according to the materialistic outlook of *smārtas* a major aberration in Vaiṣṇava society and a blockage to *śuddha-bhakti,* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura felt keenly obliged to reestablish the original Vaiṣṇava observances in conformance with directions given in *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā* and *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa,* which gave extensive *śāstrīya* references probative that all other forms of worship are automatically effected by worship of Viṣṇu, that obligations to the forebears, demigods, and the rest are absolved for persons who have taken shelter of Viṣṇu, and that if not first offered to Viṣṇu, anything offered to one's predecessors or anyone else cannot even slightly benefit them. In addition, he gave *śāstrīya* evidence delineating performance of obsequies by the Vaiṣṇava system, insisting that particularly those initiated as Vaiṣṇavas should simply concentrate on Viṣṇu worship and not deviate to demigod worship, *karma-kāṇḍīya śrāddha,* or any other activity not primarily focused on satisfying Lord Viṣṇu. He reminded devotees that their supposed bodily relationships with their supposed bodily relations were temporary and meaningless, being based

on the illusory conception of identifying the body as the self, and that by the Lord's mercy devotees' ancestors do not become ghosts, nor are Vaiṣṇavas interested in dispatching their ancestors or anyone else to Pitṛloka, as their only goal is the spiritual world, the abode of Viṣṇu.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī asserted that for all these reasons *śrāddha* is unnecessary for Vaiṣṇavas, who after the death of a relative need not maintain signs of mourning or observe a period of *aśauca.* Yet he allowed *gṛhastha* disciples to perform obsequies according to the Vaiṣṇava system, as a token ceremony to pacify their relatives and neighbors who lacked faith that Kṛṣṇa protects His devotees. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī explained:

> Whether a *gṛhastha* or a renunciant, a Vaiṣṇava does not observe a period of *aśauca.* Devotees should not independently perform rituals such as *śrāddha* and oblations to the forefathers, for they are automatically effected by performing Hari-*sevā.* Nonetheless, in accordance with general usages, *gṛhastha* devotees, who by chanting *harināma* are anyway pure, may on the eleventh day after the relative's death, or on any other day, perform *śrāddha* with *mahā-prasāda.* This is called Vaiṣṇava *śrāddha.*[108]

Vaiṣṇava *śrāddha* as ordained by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was devoid of *smārta* procedures, being much-simplified observances comprised of core devotional activities: *kīrtana* followed by Hari-*kathā* appropriate to the occasion (i.e., elucidating the philosophical understanding of a Vaiṣṇava's passing, and glorifiying the devotional activities of the departed devotee), offering a portion of *mahā-prasāda* to benefit that soul, and finally distributing *mahā-prasāda* (of the presiding deity of either the household or the local Gauḍīya Maṭha) to invited devotees rather than feeding *smārta-brāhmaṇas* as per the social norm. That esurient *smārta-brāhmaṇas* should not be fed at *śrāddhas* was upheld by the proscription in *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (3.6.67) against calling professional *brāhmaṇas*— for instance, those who receive a fixed salary for teaching or worshiping deities or who make a point to get themselves invited to religious feasts.[109] Thus Vaiṣṇava *śrāddha* differed significantly, both conceptually and in manner of performance, from the *karma-kāṇḍīya* version.

Prior to setting up base in Calcutta, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had but a few disciples, most of whom were youthful *brahmacārīs.* So not until November 1918, when under his direction the required rituals for the departed father of Śrī Vanamālī dāsa Adhikārī, a householder disciple of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, was performed by another disciple, did he have an opportunity to introduce Vaiṣṇava *śrāddha.* In the home of the deceased, he gave a potent speech stressing the need for devotees to observe such formalities by employing the transcendental system meant for satisfying Lord Viṣṇu, as described in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* and *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā,* and not according to the mundane usages of the *smārtas.* Thereafter, *śrāddhas* according to the Vaiṣṇava system, performed either in the local Maṭha or in homes of disciples whose relatives had deceased, became the standard among Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's followers. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī delineated the process for performing *śrāddha* in a manner befitting Vaiṣṇavas:

> Your father has attained the eternal Jagannātha Purī. Jagannātha Purī is directly

Vaikuṇṭha. Whoever quits the body while chanting the holy names attains the eternal abode of the Lord. Anything done according to mundane considerations results in rebirth in the material world. The various Vedic rites award material sense objects as karmic results. But devotees dedicated to chanting the holy names should offer oblations to their deceased ancestors with the Lord's *prasāda.* To make oblations with any other kind of foodstuff is not indicative of intelligence.

Fruitive rituals are an invitation to entanglement in the consequences of action. Persons who chant *harināma* do not consider enjoying such results. Yet their relatives are obliged to offer *bhoga* to the Lord and then make an oblation with the *prasāda* for the wellbeing of the departed soul. As part of the same procedure, they should invite Vaiṣṇavas and satisfy them with *prasāda,* and a *harināma-yajña* (sacrifice of chanting the holy name) should be held. Our judgment is approved by the pure devotional scriptures. Those who deem mixed devotion best may have a different understanding according to their state of advancement, yet we cannot respect that.[110]

An initiated devotee who has taken shelter of the holy name should offer oblations of *mahā-prasāda* to his forefathers on the eleventh day after his forefather's death. Thereafter he should feed pure devotee *brāhmaṇas* with *mahā-prasāda*. It is good if this is done in the Maṭha. Those who are not initiated devotees and do not chant *harināma,* or who are unable to tolerate the arrowlike words of society, can offer oblations to their forefathers according to the prescribed *smārta* method. Nondevotees should, according to the prescriptions for *śūdras,* for thirty days exhibit the signs of mourning and eat only *haviṣyānna* once daily.[*] But devotees in the shelter of the holy name need not worry about *smārta-vidhi,* and should honor *mahā-prasāda* every day. Please rid yourself of the superstition that a Vaiṣṇava becomes a ghost after death and that his *śrāddha* should be performed with foods not first offered to the Lord.

The arrangements provided in the *smārta* system are established according to one's position in society. Performing *smārta śrāddha* causes one to again enter a mother's womb. The Lord's devotees never accede to such a system, knowing it to be opposed to *śāstra.* And *smārtas* cannot comprehend the understanding of liberated souls.[111]

Reintroducing Vaiṣṇava *śrāddha* would prove to be a protracted fray. It required great fealty for people to acknowledge the authority of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and break away from family customs and social norms. To follow him meant to join in defying the entire current of materialistic society and hence invite criticism, slander, even ostracism. Nevertheless, by his conviction, sincerity, persistence, and robust arguments based on scriptural statements, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was able to convince many to accept him in contradiction to the rest of the world. But this particular point of observing *śrāddha* with Vaiṣṇava procedures was a watershed test for his followers. Those lacking full faith worried about the future of their departed relatives and their own fate should they fail to execute conventional practices. However, each *śrāddha* and marriage performed according to the rites of *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā*

added credence to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's stance and helped others to gain confidence in this system, while undermining both the influence of the *smārta* priests and one of their traditional sources of income. Indeed, each *śrāddha* and marriage so executed was reported in the *Gauḍīya* as a victory for Vaiṣṇava *smṛti.*

Specific Encounters

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī spoke relentlessly against *apa-sampradāyas* and wrote profusely against their faulty conclusions, publishing articles with spunky titles like "Bhāi Sahajiyā." Certain opponents retaliated drastically. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda recalled:

> Once they conspired to kill him. My guru-*mahārāja* personally told me, "The Navadvīpa *gosāñis,* they want to kill me. They collected twenty-five thousand rupees and went to bribe the police officer in charge of that area, saying, 'You take these twenty-five thousand rupees. We shall do something against Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, and you don't take any steps.'" He could understand that they wanted to kill him. So the police officer frankly told Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, "Of course we accept bribes and indulge in such things, but not for a sadhu, not for a saintly person. I cannot dare." The police officer refused and said to my guru-*mahārāja,* "You take care. This is the position." This was because he so vehemently protested.[*]

Members of the Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā were invited to the Kashimbazar Sammilanī, scheduled to be held in Comilla, East Bengal, in April 1920. But upon seeing that the program included discussing and singing of *gopī-līlās,* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had leading members of the *sabhā* write to the convenor, Maharaja Maṇīndra-candra Nandī, a series of questions regarding the wisdom of joining the Sammilanī, and requesting appropriate answers based on scriptural evidence. Although the maharaja presented those queries to the assembled *paṇḍitas,* no reply was issued. Forthwith, the interrogative letter was published in *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* as evidence of the unanswered opposition by the Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā to that *prākṛta-sahajiyā* convention.[†] No members of the *sabhā* attended the Sammilanī.

Once a man unknown to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and his disciples came to the Gauḍīya Maṭha and over three days put many provocative questions to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. That man then suddenly passed away, upon which Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī lamented, "He was my guru, yet I did not recognize him. He challenged in various ways to make me enter deeply into the understanding of *bhakti-siddhānta,* and then departed."

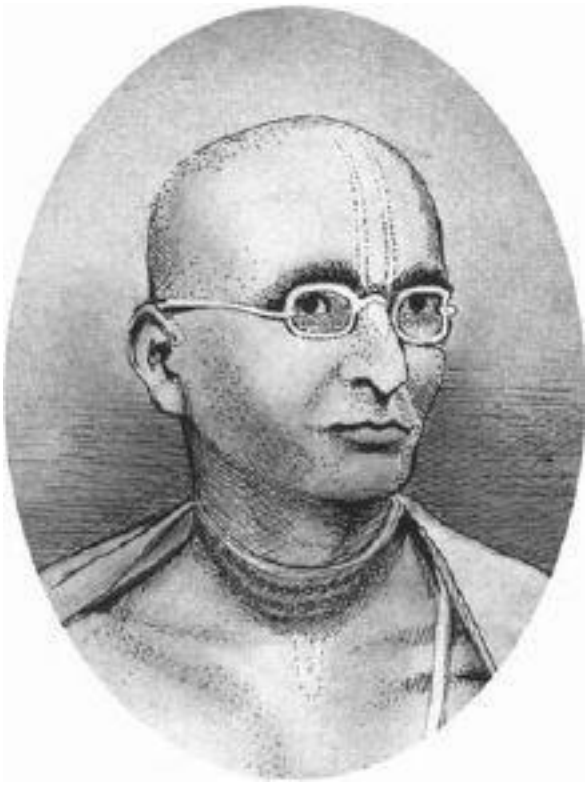
Another man once asked Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura about different quasispiritual organizations: "What is the Ramakrishna Mission doing? What is taught at Aurobindo Ashram?" Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura answered, "Why have you come to me? If you want to purchase cloth, go to the cloth shop, not the sweet shop or brass shop. This is the *bhakti* school. If you come here, ask about *bhakti*. First of all decide what you want, then go to the right place. If you go to the cloth shop and ask, 'Why is the medicine shop selling bad medicine?' what can they reply?"

Addressing children nine or ten years old in an English-medium primary school, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura asked them, "Which is better, to water *tulasī* or eggplant?" He wanted to dissolve the misconception promoted by an atheistic swami who had remarked, "What is the use of

watering the *tulasī* plant? It is better to water eggplant. By watering eggplant one can get food, but what is the use of watering *tulasī*?" When most of the children answered that it is better to water eggplant, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura edified them in simple language: "We should work without personal motive and not crave the result. Worship Godhead without desire for reward. *Tu la s ī* is not a plant like eggplant, which gives fruit, but being an expansion of Rādhā, she is dear to Kṛṣṇa. She is the ticket collector for entrance to the *rāsa-maṇḍala*. Without her permission no one can go to Vṛndāvana."

On tour in Midnapore District, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's men located a school hall for holding a preaching function but the management refused to allow such an assembly, citing that higher authorities had forbidden all religious instruction therein lest they be guilty of sectarianism. Further efforts to find a suitable venue met the same response. Upon being informed of that, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī lamented that the leaders of society were possessed of such dull reasoning as to ban all religious talks for fear of sectarianism. He compared this to a person who having been deluded by perceiving a mirage on water, thereafter prohibits forever and in all circumstances any endeavor to procure water, or upon ascertaining that fire is not available from a glowworm, concludes that fire is never associated with light.

Even though most of those targeted by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura did not reform themselves, and hence such combats continued interminably, that each topic was exhaustively analyzed and its true import definitively established, particularly in *Gauḍīya* articles, was itself victory and a legacy that would continue to protect and enlighten truth-seekers—for truth has its own dignity, and is recognized by purified persons who are thoroughly honest.



Part Four:
Disciples, Associates, and Acquaintances

One

Accepting and Honoring Disciples

During the course of his preaching career, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī accepted approximately three thousand disciples, mostly from Bengal, Orissa, and Assam. Since a number of his Maṭhas had only three or four inmates, probably he had between five hundred to a thousand *brahmacārī* disciples and somewhat less than five thousand *gṛhastha* disciples, including those who had taken only *harināma*.[*] The great majority of his disciples were male. Many were well educated and held respected positions in society. Among the householders were several teachers, professors, and zamindars. Among the *maṭha-vāsīs* were three physicians: Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahārāja, Śrī Kṛṣṇa-kānti Brahmacārī, and Śrī Śyāmasundara Brahmacārī.[†] Yet he also had a significant number of simple and unlettered disciples.

Harināma was awarded to persons who had associated for some time with Gauḍīya Maṭha devotees and were desirous of seriously practicing Hari-*bhajana.* Candidates for receiving *harināma* committed to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra daily and abstain from the principal influences of Kali-yuga mentioned in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.17.38) by forswearing: eating of meat, fish, eggs, and other food forbidden for Vaiṣṇavas, especially garlic and onions; intoxicants, including mild varieties like tea, coffee, and pan; illicit sexual connection; and gambling.[‡] Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was the first to introduce these four regulative principles as an explicit prerequisite for discipleship. Formerly, within all Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas* this condition was an unspoken understanding, but among most *apa-sampradāyas* it had been gradually neglected or deliberately misconstrued to the extent that such basic *sadācāra* was considered unnecessary and unimportant. And apart from these basic formal stipulations, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura also expected a high level of dedication and surrender from his disciples—that they seriously strive for advancement in Hari-*bhakti* and help push on the mission.

Generally aspirants for *harināma* were instructed and guided by senior devotees designated to oversee their spiritual progress. Upon ascertaining a novice's genuine faith in *śuddha-bhakti,* a monitor would present him to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī as suitable for receiving *harināma.* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī commonly gave *harināma* to devotees in groups by pronouncing the *mahā-mantra* and other important mantras and by giving relevant instructions, particularly on the ten offenses to the holy names; then he would offer to each disciple *japa* beads that he had first chanted on. This was termed *harināma-pradāna* (bestowal of *harināma*) and not deemed *dīkṣā* per se, for being nondifferent from Hari, *harināma* is not a *dīkṣā* mantra.

When he could not be physically present, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura bestowed *harināma* by chanting on a *japa-mālā* and sending it to the aspiring disciple through a representative, who on Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's behalf would relay the directions concerning *harināma*.

Sometimes without any pre-testing, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura bestowed *harināma* upon persons

who simply requested it, for instance to a leper who once heard his Hari-*kathā* at Saccidānanda Maṭha.[*] Another time when asked for *harināma,* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura told the candidate that on an upcoming train journey he should accompany him between Balasore and Bhadrak and would then be given *harināma.*

Upon awarding of *harināma* it was understood that a guru-disciple relationship was now firmly established and the devotee formally admitted into *śuddha-bhakti*. If a *harināma* initiate had followed the prescribed rules for at least a year, then usually he would be lustrated by *dīkṣā,* receiving Brahma-*gāyatrī* and *pāñcarātrika* mantras to chant daily. This was in accordance with *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa,* which states that a prospective guru and disciple should test one another for a year before fully committing to each other. Yet sometimes Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura simultaneously gave both *harināma* and *dīkṣā* to a devotee whom he regarded qualified and whom he adjudged would benefit by immediately receiving the relevant mantras. To *maṭha-vāsīs,* he often awarded *harināma* on Gaura-*jayantī* and *dīkṣā* on the following Janmāṣṭamī, or vice versa.

Only upon receiving *dīkṣā* would a Gauḍīya Maṭha devotee be considered a full-fledged disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, with the suffix "dāsa" added to his name. *Dīkṣā* conferred brahminical status, entitling the recipient to perform deity worship and priestly rituals. For these reasons, being *dīkṣita* was taken as superior to being *harināma-āśrita* (within the shelter of the holy name). In accord with standard Vedic culture and as particularly observed by Vaiṣṇavas, the general rule was that junior devotees should offer *daṇḍavat* to and behave respectfully toward seniors, who would reciprocate by affectionate dealings and giving guidance. Seniority was determined especially by the number of years invested in the mission, and those with *dīkṣā* were regarded a notch above the *harināma-āśrita.* Devotees were quite conscious of who had been initiated before or after them. Some even held as junior a godbrother who had been initiated only days later than himself, even if that "junior" had for many years excelled him in practical service. Other important determinants of seniority were a devotee's closeness to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, and manifest spiritual qualifications such as scriptural knowledge, achievements in service to the mission, and so on. Physical and social factors like age and family background were also taken into account.

Yet Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī did not necessarily concur with such notions of seniority. At Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu once arranged that the *dīkṣita* sit for taking *mahā-prasāda* in a separate line from those who were "merely" *harināma-āśrita.* When Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī saw this he remarked, "The *dīkṣita* are inferior to the *harināma-āśrita.* They don't believe that the name and the named are nondifferent. For them deity worship is required." He then quoted Lord Caitanya's statements *ihā haite sarva-siddhi haibe sabāra* (The holy name alone gives all perfection) and *dīkṣā puraścaryā-vidhi apekṣā nā kare* (With the holy name, one need not undergo initiation or *puraścaryā* observances, as with other mantras).[1] Indeed, to some disciples he never awarded *dīkṣā,* deeming *harināma* alone sufficient for their spiritual progress. And he stated, "The success of *dīkṣā* is inclination for *harināma.* Whoever remains fixed in chanting inoffensively should be understood to have

undergone *dīkṣā* and all other proceedings."[2]

A man of low caste from Assam who had heard of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's transcendental qualities came to Māyāpur to become his disciple. He was unaware that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura bestowed brahminical initiation upon qualified candidates irrespective of their birthcaste. He was given *harināma* and told that he could return after some time to receive *dīkṣā.* In those days caste bracketing was exceedingly strong and considered unchangeable, so even though that devotee strictly followed the devotional regulations at home, he was reluctant to accept an *upavīta,* fearing harrassment to himself and his family if he were to transgress societal norms by becoming a *brāhmaṇa.* When this disciple next met Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and outlined his dilemma, he was told that there was no need to take *dīkṣā;* if he simply followed the prescribed rules and chanted the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, he would certainly advance in *bhakti* and ultimately be rescued from the material predicament. Furthermore, he should not think himself any lower in status than Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's *dīkṣita* disciples.

To his earliest disciples Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī gave *pāñcarātrika* mantras for worship of Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Kṛṣṇa, yet out of humility he withheld those for worshiping the guru. But when the young Śrī Vinoda Bihārī Brahmacārī was awarded *dīkṣā* without the guru mantra he asked, "How can I worship Śrī Gaurāṅga and Gopījanavallabha Kṛṣṇa without first worshiping my guru? Must I go to another guru to obtain the guru mantra?" Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī relented and fulfilled Vinoda Bihārī Prabhu's desire, and thereafter gave the guru mantra to all others accepting *dīkṣā*.

In the early days of the mission Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura gave only *harināma,* but not *dīkṣā,* to women. So when his *harināma* disciple Śrīmatī Sarojavāsinī devī asked for *mantra-dīkṣā,* initially he refused.[*] Yet upon her importunate requests, he finally relented. Thereafter he freely gave *dīkṣā* to suitably qualified women disciples by imparting *pāncarātrika dīkṣā-mantras,* but not Brahma-*gāyatrī* or the sacred thread worn by *brāhmaṇa* men. In many cases women received *harināma* or *dīkṣā* simultaneously with their husbands. Since the *dīkṣita* were required to take food cooked only by *dīkṣita* persons, it was thus both practical and natural that a *saha-dharmiṇī* (wife who executes dharma together with her husband) receive *dīkṣā* along with her spouse. In some cases women were initiated even if their husbands were not.

At the time of awarding *harināma* or *dīkṣā* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura often gave personal instructions for practicing spiritual life. When he bestowed *harināma* upon Śrī Daṇḍapāṇi Dolāi in 1930, he directed him to chant the *mahā-mantra,* observe Ekādaśī and Vaiṣṇava festivals, study Vaiṣṇava literature, especially *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* and to try to learn Sanskrit.[*] Two years later, when Daṇḍapāṇi Dolāi was awarded *dīkṣā,* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura instructed him to chant one lakh of names daily; but due to family responsibilities Daṇḍapāṇi Prabhu found that directive too difficult to follow. During his simultaneous bestowal of *harināma* and *dīkṣā* to Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu in 1933, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura advised him to read *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu.*

As the activities of the institution and the number of disciples increased, it became practical that

junior devotees be guided by seniors rather than directly by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. Hence some leading devotees in different regions became virtual *śikṣā*-gurus for those in their locale; examples were Śrīmad Bhāratī Mahārāja in Dacca, Śrīpāda Jadubara dāsa Adhikārī in Mymensingh, and Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu in Orissa. Generally Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī gave *dīkṣā* only to aspirants recommended by one of these trusted seniors. He would refer to such mentored devotees in relationship to their guide—for example, as "Sundarānandera-loka" or "Bhakti-Sudhākarera-loka".[†] Normally *brahmacārīs* living in a Gauḍīya Maṭha were under the auspices of a sannyasi, and householders living outside were overseen by a senior *gṛhastha.* This system of organization according to different locations and levels of authority contributed to the growth of the Gauḍīya Maṭha.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had no qualms in giving *harināma* to persons previously initiated by pseudo-Vaiṣṇava gurus, considering such initiations by *prākṛta-sahajiyās* worse than useless. He also inducted into Kṛṣṇa-mantra a disciple of the venerable Śrī Vāsudeva Rāmānuja dāsa.[‡]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī did not approve of his disciples initiating during his presence. One of his first sannyasis had for some time dissociated himself from the mission and was doing so. When later he rejoined the mission, he offered those disciples to his guru-*mahārāja,* who again initiated them. Yet as a pragmatic extension of his compassion, when sending preachers overseas Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī told them that as his representatives they should confer *harināma* on deserving candidates. Thus Śrīmad Bon Mahārāja initiated two German recruits, and Bhakti Sāraṅga Prabhu gave initiation to one woman in London.

Prior to approaching Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura for *harināma,* a bearded headmaster was screened by senior disciples. The man professed, "If Prabhupāda orders me, I am prepared to jump into fire." But when in the presence of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura he was asked to shave, the man retorted that he liked his beard and was not willing to relinquish it. He gave various arguments for preserving his carefully preened hairs, one being that traditionally many sadhus kept beards. Finally Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura told him, "Either you love your beard or you love Kṛṣṇa. If you want Kṛṣṇa then give up your hair. One of them should be dear to you. Kṛṣṇa is our *priya* (dear one). If anything else is our *priya* it is impossible to get Kṛṣṇa." A disciple present cracked that if the headmaster were actually to enter fire, then certainly he would lose his beard; yet the headmaster decided to keep his beard, and left without taking *harināma*. Shortly afterward in a bicycle accident, his beloved whiskers got caught in the mechanism of the cycle and were forcibly and painfully removed. Now sheared of his beard as well as much of his egotism, he again submitted himself to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and was accepted for initiation.

After hearing Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī lecture, a yogi asked to become his disciple and was told that to please Kṛṣṇa he would first have to cut his long matted hair and beard. The yogi acquiesced, but trimmed only his hair and not his beard. When again Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī asked him to shave his face, he explained that he preferred to keep the beard to hide a grotesque scar on his chin. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī consented and initiated him.

Śrīmad Bhāratī Mahārāja once recommended the *brahmacārīs* Rādhā-ramaṇa Prabhu, Nitāi

Prabhu, and Hari Kṛṣṇa Prabhu to receive *dīkṣā*.* But Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura portended that Nitāi Prabhu would soon marry and Hari Kṛṣṇa Prabhu would start posing as a guru; only Rādhā-ramaṇa Prabhu was a suitable possibility. Although Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura eventually assented to Bhāratī Mahārāja's pleas, his forecast proved true.

Names

If a person's given name was typical of a Vaiṣṇava, then generally Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī did not change it when bestowing *harināma,* and sometimes not even at the time of *dīkṣā*. For example, a disciple who was already named Nityānanda, upon accepting *harināma* became known as Śrī Nityānanda Brahmacārī. In several cases Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī only slightly altered the original name, as when he initiated Ananta Basu as Śrī Ananta Vāsudeva dāsa, Abhaya Caraṇa De as Śrī Abhaya Caraṇāravinda dāsa, and Jatīndra Rāya as Śrī Jati Śekhara dāsa. In consonance with a practice in Vaiṣṇava and even non-Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas,* if an initiate's name was being significantly changed, then usually the first letter was retained; for instance, Pramoda became Praṇavānanda, and Subodha, Sundarānanda.

In many cases, even after receiving new names, non-*maṭha-vāsī gṛhasthas* were mostly still known by their previous names. Some examples: the well-known Śrīpāda Nārāyaṇa dāsa Adhikārī Bhakti Sudhākara was often referred to as Professor Sanyal; Ādi-Keśava Prabhu was generally referred to as O.B.L. Kapoor; and Satprasaṅgānanda, "he whose pleasure is the association of pure devotees" (adapted from SB 3.25.25), was throughout his long life as a *brahmacārī* known to all by his pre-initiation name, Satish—probably because Satprasaṅgānanda is a lengthy appellation, unfamiliar, and not understood by most. Examples of other unique and not easily recognizable names that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī gave are:

Śivada-vāstava-vigraha—the form of the truth that bestows auspiciousness (adapted from SB 1.1.2);

Dhanyātidhanya—highly fortunate (from Śrīla Prabodhananda Sarasvatī's *Rādhā-rasa-sudhā-nidhi* 2);

Saundarye-kāma-koṭi—beautiful like millions of Cupids (a name for Caitanya Mahāprabhu, from Śrīla Prabodhananda Sarasvatī's *Caitanya-candrāmṛta*). This name was given to a devotee whose facial features were black and ugly, thus indicating that as a servant of the supremely beautiful, he possessed an essential beauty far more significant than physical attractiveness;

Ānanda-līlāmaya-vigraha—the form of divinely blissful pastimes (another name of Mahāprabhu from *Caitanya-candrāmṛta*).

Many names were generally stated in brief—for instance, Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu was informally referred to and addressed as Vāsudeva Prabhu; and Aprākṛta Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī as Gosvāmī Mahārāja or Aprākṛta Prabhu. In several cases Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura gave the same name to more than one disciple; for example, apart from Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu, he also named another householder devotee Nārāyaṇa dāsa, and he named at least two devotees Abhaya Caraṇāravinda dāsa.

Householders had *dāsa adhikārī,* also rendered *dāsādhikārī,* appended to their names.[*] But often *dāsa* was not stated in the names of *brahmacārīs,* since the identity of a *brahmacārī* is already that of a menial servant.[†] Nor was *dāsa* included in the names of sannyasis, to avoid the apparent oxymoron of designating them as both master (Svāmī or Gosvāmī) and servant (although in Vaiṣṇava parlance *svāmī* connotes a devotee in control of his senses and devoid of the exploitive tendency, thus fit to be the *dāsa* of the Supreme Lord and all His living beings).

Vānaprastha literally means "one who has gone to the forest," and since Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas aspire for residence in the forest of Vṛndāvana, Gauḍīya Maṭha *vānaprasthas* had the affix Vraja-vāsī appended to their names.[‡] According to *śāstra, vānaprastha* is the stage after the *gṛhastha-āśrama* and is observed by a man's living a wholly or mainly religiously oriented life, with or without the company of his wife. The standard for Gauḍīya Maṭha *vānaprasthas* was to live at the Maṭha and keep little or no connection with their previous family.

In the early days of his movement, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī told his disciples to abandon the standard Bengali usage of addressing elder compatriots as *dādā* and tagging *dā* to the end of senior godbrothers' names. He told them to instead say *prabhu,* seeing every godbrother as another form of the guru.[§]Although addressing disciples as *prabhu* was an ancient practice, traditional Gauḍīya usage had restricted this term to the Supreme Lord, one's own guru, and foremost devotees of the *sampradāya.*[*] Nonetheless, following the example of his own guru-*mahārāja* toward himself, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura generally called male disciples not simply by name, but with the appendage *prabhu*—except sannyasis, whom he and others referred to as *mahārāja.* Yet *prabhu* was to be used only in conjunction with names given at the time of initiation, because a Vaiṣṇava considers as master whoever is identified as Hari's servant.

Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa Brahmacārī became perplexed when after receiving *dīkṣā* other *maṭha-vāsīs* started to address him as *prabhu,* for as a young lad he felt embarrassed to be accorded such respect. He revealed his discomfiture to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who explained that it is proper to offer such respect to an initiated devotee, as per Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's description of the extraordinary status that Kṛṣṇa confers to him upon initiation:

> *dīkṣā-kāle bhakta kare ātma-samarpaṇa*
> *sei-kāle kṛṣṇa tāre kare ātma-sama*
>
> At the time of initiation, when a devotee fully surrenders unto the Lord's service, Kṛṣṇa accepts him to be as good as Himself. (Cc 3.4.192)

Honorific Titles

In accordance with the tradition of Vedic scholarly and devotional communities to confer laudatory titles on deserving persons, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura offered formal recognition to devotees and well-wishers by awarding them appropriate honorifics. Devotees acting as *śikṣā*-gurus within the Gauḍīya Maṭha were designated as Upadeśaka (instructor), Mahopadeśaka (great instructor), or Mahā-mahopadeśaka (very great instructor). When simultaneously decorating the *brahmacārīs* Hayagrīva, Praṇavānanda, and Siddha-svarūpa as Mahopadeśakas, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura stated that the world should listen to them because their words are nondifferent from their life. The honorific Mahā-mahopadeśaka was awarded only to Kuñja Bihārī, Ananta Vāsudeva, Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda, Nārāyaṇa dāsa Bhakti Sudhākara, and Aprākṛta Bhakti Sāraṅga Prabhus; ten devotees were Mahopadeśaka and ten Upadeśaka.[*]

Several devotees were conferred the designation Ācārya to indicate their learning and paradigmatic devotional behavior. Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu and Jadubara dāsa Adhikārī were entitled Ācāryadvika (*ācārya* twice over), and Kuñja Bihārī Vidyābhūṣaṇa Prabhu was designated Ācāryatrika (*ācārya* thrice over). Distinctions like Vedāntācārya (exemplary teacher of Vedānta), Satācārya (exemplary teacher of truth), and Vidyābhūṣaṇa (one whose decoration is knowledge) were conferred in appreciation of devotional scholasticism and to demonstrate that a devotee is learned and aware of all scriptural conclusions. Titles, mostly beginning with *Bhakti* and followed by a modifying adjective, were given in formal recognition of outstanding achievements or steady commitment to the mission. Examples were Bhakti Rañjana (one who delights in devotion), Bhakti Kuñjara (elephantine [i.e., powerful] in devotional service), and Sevā-vilāsa (one whose pleasure is service). Thereafter such devotees were often addressed by their titles—Ācāryatrika Prabhu, Bhakti Rañjana Prabhu, and so on. Titles were also awarded to certain patrons and helpers who although not initiated had performed significant service to the mission.

All such designations were conferred by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī at meetings of and on behalf of the Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā. At these conventions he would also recite Sanskrit verses he had composed in glorification of those disciples receiving titles, and then present the verses to each recipient on a scroll called an *āśīrvāda-patra,* in recognition of an individual's spirit of service to His mission.

Although titles were meant to encourage recipients that their devotional efforts were being blessed, and to proclaim to non-Vaiṣṇavas the status of Vaiṣṇavas, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura indubitably did not intend that his disciples become proud of their intellectual or other achievements, as is common with mundane persons, or that they regard learning or title as more important than devotion. By making sannyasis and awarding designations to accomplished devotees, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura facilitated the serving of superiors by subordinates, thus simultaneously benefiting juniors and providing assistance to the seniors for their missionary endeavors.

However, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī indicated that for at least some persons the distinctions were meant as an incentive to continue in service. He would tell the parable of a zamindar who could not get any employees to stay long until he started feeding them first-class food; similarly, gurus sometimes offer titles, power, and positions to materialistic people to bait them into performing Kṛṣṇa-*sevā*.

Two

Guru-Disciple Interactions

His Mood and Role as Guru

Amid an atmosphere of increasing skepticism toward gurus and toward any form of authoritarian mentorship, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, in defiance of both the egalitarian zeitgeist and the languid guruship endemic to it, took an unabashedly absolute and magisterial role in relationship to his disciples, to reaffirm the sacred principle upheld by all genuine *ācāryas, śāstras,* and *sampradāyas*—that a bona fide guru is the ultimate arbiter of the absolute truth and must be accepted as good as Godhead, because he is as good as Godhead.

> The transcendental spiritual master is not of this world. He is not temporary, or a brash of flesh and blood. He is eternal and full of knowledge and bliss, like the Supreme Lord. The spiritual master is the Supreme Lord in human form. He is not an ordinary human being.[1]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura revealed that above even the understanding that the guru is as good as God, if a devotee were to rise a little higher and look up, he would find that Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is performing the function of guru for those who have attained to Vraja-*bhajana,* is the source of the guru's grace, and is the original wellspring of pure service and love:

> It is not that Śrī Rādhārāṇī is not present. Even now we can attain Her lotus feet and service. If we can see the beauty of Śrī Rādhārāṇī's toenails in our spiritual master's lotus feet, we will no longer think about where to find Her. If we are fortunate enough, we can attain service to and *darśana* of Śrī Rādhārāṇī's lotus feet in the *darśana* of our spiritual master's lotus feet, because he is nondifferent from Śrī Rādhā and very dear to Her.
>
> In *mādhurya-rasa* the spiritual master is an intimate *sakhī* of Śrī Rādhārāṇī. He is nondifferent from the daughter of Vṛṣabhānu. Only the sincere disciples of a spiritual master in *mādhurya-rasa* can attain *darśana* of the beauty of Śrī Rādhā's toenails through the form of their guru. Only the close *śiṣyas* of a spiritual master can realize that he is a manifestation of, and thus nondifferent from, the daughter of King Vṛṣabhānu, Śrī Rādhā.[2]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī executed his duties as a guru most seriously and expected his disciples to reciprocate accordingly. Among Bengali Vaiṣṇavas, the guileless sincerity required in authentic guru-disciple relationships had become widely supplanted by oily displays of affection and submission, maintained largely as a socio-religious custom. But Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī despised such obsequious dissimulations. Through their culture, Bengali Vaiṣṇavas had imbibed the laudible tendency to automatically offer *daṇḍavat* to sadhus and elders, yet Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī coined the term *daṇḍavat-bhakta* for devotees who offered him prostration but little else, and who had no interest in hearing from him for their own betterment. In other words, their *daṇḍavat* lacked in service attitude and surrender, and hence such devotees were like lifeless sticks that fell to the ground but never did anything useful. He used to say, *daṇḍavat sahasrāṇi kare patra na dīyate:* "You offer thousands of *daṇḍavat* but cannot give as much as a leaf in my hand."

Desiring to purge any shards of such attitudes from his *śiṣyas,* he declared that a disciple lacking sincere, pure, topmost devotion at the lotus feet of the bona fide spiritual master cannot be considered an actual *śiṣya.* He upheld the scripturally prescribed culture by which disciples must respect *śrī*-guru as the spokesman of the absolute truth and imbibe the purport of Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura's declaration of guru-*bhakti:*

guru-mukha-padma-vākya, cittete kariyā aikya,
ār nā kariha mane āśā

> Rejecting all other desires, make one with the heart the words from the guru's lotus mouth.[3]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī did not demand respect or allegiance. He never said, "You should follow me," but established on principle why a guru, and why also the Gauḍīya Maṭha, should be followed. He never claimed authority based on his personality alone, but on his allegiance to *śāstra* and the *paramparā.* He regarded himself a humble servitor both of the Gauḍīya Maṭha and the *paramparā* that had bequeathed upon him the service of guruship. Although he never instructed his disciples to worship him, his leading followers became inspired to do so upon considering *śāstrīya* injunctions for worship of *śrī*-guru, by observing his genuine and heartfelt worship of his own gurus, and out of natural reverence, affection, and gratefulness toward their eternal savior. And while graciously accepting the fanfare of guruship, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī retained the intrinsic humility of a Vaiṣṇava. Addressing the paradox of a humble Vaiṣṇava accepting honor befitting a guru he wrote:

> A real guru does not make disciples; he makes them into gurus by turning persons envious of Kṛṣṇa into His devotees. If a Vaiṣṇava does not do the work of a guru, the spiritual Vaiṣṇava lineage will stop; yet if he does the work of a guru, then he becomes a non-Vaiṣṇava. Therefore it is not proper that an unqualified person take the role of guru, for that will be inauspicious and will lead to downfall. A guru does not think of himself as such, due to his strong identification within his heart of being a servant of Bhagavān. If a guru thinks, "I am a guru," then the first *u* in the word *guru* disappears and the word becomes *garu* (cow). A real guru serves Kṛṣṇa twenty-four hours daily, having no other duty. Only one fully dedicated to guru-*sevā* is qualified to act as guru of others.[4]

A *mahā-bhāgavata* knows that all others are his gurus; thus only a *mahā-bhāgavata* is *jagad*-guru.[5]

And he applied this to himself:

> I am fit only to pray for mercy from all people of the world. I and all others understand that I have been given the responsibility of guruship even though I am exceedingly unqualified.[6]

He professed, "I am *patita* (fallen), whereas you (referring to his disciples) are *pāvanas*

(purifiers). I am supposed to serve you."[7] At his first Vyāsa-*pūjā* he addressed the disciples gathered to worship him as "my friends, rescuers from danger." In accordance with this sentiment, he addressed all but a few of his *śiṣyas* in the respectful form *āpni*.[*] Sometimes he asked disciples to bless him or ascribed to them a status higher than his own.[*] Concluding a speech at his Vyāsa-*pūjā* festival in 1936 he submitted, "I do not and will not make any *śiṣyas*. All of you are my gurus. Taking my fallen self as your disciple, be merciful to me."[8] Similarly, in one of his last speeches (December 1936) he submitted, "I have not made any *śiṣyas*. All are my gurus. I always learn from everybody. May they kindly give me the chance to follow their ideal of *bhajana."*[9]

Although he accepted formal worship on a level unprecedentedly high for the Gauḍīya-*sampradāya,* particularly during the elaborate ceremonies conducted over several days during observation of Vyāsa-*pūjā* in his honor, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī made it clear that he never thought himself to be as good as or a replacement for Vyāsadeva. During these celebrations he spent much of the time discharging his usual function of representing Vyāsa by profusely distributing the distilled essence of Vyāsadeva's teachings in the form of Hari-*kathā*. His disciples also gave formal addresses, offering back to their spiritual master praise of his transcendental qualities in the language and with the understanding they had imbibed from him. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī accepted such homage to teach the world how *śrī-gurudeva* should be respected as a delegate of Vyāsa, and how worship of devotees is essential in the actual process for worshiping Kṛṣṇa. As he explained, to worship only Kṛṣṇa without also worshiping His devotees will tend toward impersonalism. From his perspective, the worship offered by his disciples was subsidiary to the opportunity that Vyāsa-*pūjā* afforded him to worship Śrīla Vyāsadeva and to worship his own gurus as nondifferent from Vyāsa. On the Vyāsa-*pūjā* of his fifty-fourth year he stated:

> Because from the materialistic viewpoint I am unworthy of all the extolment that you have spoken about me, as the servant of my gurus I thus offer it all at their lotus feet, regarding such extolment as suitable for them.[10]

Elsewhere he clarified how a guru accepts the role of Vyāsa by maintaining an attitude of servitorship to Vyāsa and his representatives:

> On the occasion of his Vyāsa-*pūjā,* Madhvācārya discharged the function of *ācārya* by sitting on the *vyāsāsana*. Expressing their loyalty to him, his followers explicate the purport of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* by sitting on the *vyāsāsana,* according to the tradition of receiving sacred texts in guru-*parampara*. Considering one's own lack of qualification, by ordinary judgment it is forbidden to sit on the *vyāsāsana,* yet may I never become inimical to the service of the guru's lotus feet by succumbing to the evil tendency to disobey his order. Speaking softly or ceasing to speak is not a qualification for sitting on the *vyāsāsana*. By sitting upon it I am not rejecting the teaching to be humbler than a blade of grass. I am not under the control of malefic desires for establishing material position, thus contradicting the statements of guru. I crave neither worldly criticism nor praise in

remuneration for my actions.[11]

Extolling his own guru, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura expressed the attitude of a sincere disciple:

> Our *gurudeva* was not an instructor in any subject concerned with enjoyment of this material world. Again, he was the sole unmistaking judge of all topics of this world. But I am deprived and fallen. Because of my weakness not everything my *gurudeva* said entered my heart. Yet may I have millions of tongues and millions of heads to repeat whatever did enter my ear by his mercy, and a lifespan of millions of years in unlimited universes for broadcasting descriptions of his incomparable non-harmful compassion. That will be my guru-*pūjā.* He will be satisfied and, being pleased, will shower unlimited benediction whereby I will be able to broadcast descriptions of his mercy with even more millions of tongues. On that day I will get release from the glorification of all topics related to this destructible illusion, and from all kinds of mundane education within the universe.[12]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī sometimes compared his role to that of a class monitor. However, he also said that the entire responsibility for the mission rested on himself, but since he could not do everything alone, Kṛṣṇa had sent him numerous assistants. Once he revealed, "A tremendous task has fallen upon me: I have to save millions of Vaiṣṇavas."[13]

As a genuine guru worthy of genuine respect, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was always planning how to awaken the whole human society to *śuddha-bhakti,* yet he never resorted to cheap tactics, nor was he interested in accumulating cheap followers. When one sannyasi arranged for many *gṛhasthas* Midnapore District to take *harināma,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī commented, "He is bringing many unctuous people just to increase his own prestige. But I don't need many pseudo-disciples. Actually they are his disciples."

At the conclusion of one Navadvīpa-dhāma Parikramā, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākuwas sitting in a canvas chair on the veranda of Bhakti Vijaya Bhavan and addressing departing pilgrims when he noticed Śrīpāda Madana-mohana dāsa Adhikārī, who had donated the full cost for constructing the main temple of Śrī Caitanya Maṭh, sitting unassumingly with other disciples directly on the floor without even a mat. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura commented that Madana Prabhu was a *nirupādhi* Vaiṣṇava (devotee without designations), whereas he himself had the designation of *ācārya* and therefore was obliged to accept a seat above others. This remark initially sounded odd to the hearers, for *śuddha-bhakti* is defined as *sarvopādhi-vinirmukta,* "free from all mundane designations." (Brs 1.1.12) Hence Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura further explained that as an *ācārya* he was duty-bound to establish the required protocol for disciples to respect *śrī-gurudeva,* as well as to receive honor to indicate the worshipable status of his own guru—analogous to a king, who being restricted by the demands of his post cannot independently go anywhere and everywhere or do anything and everything—but that Madana Prabhu, although of socially respectable position, was free to live as a humble Vaiṣṇava.[*]

Dealings with Disciples

ugro 'py anugra evāyaṁ sva-bhaktānāṁ nṛ-keśarī
keśarīva sva-potānām anyeṣāṁ ugra-vikramaḥ

> Although exceedingly ferocious, the lion is very kind to his cubs. Similarly, although very ferocious to nondevotees like Hiraṇyakaśipu, Lord Nṛsiṁha-deva is exceedingly soft and kind to devotees like Prahlāda Mahārāja.[14]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura often seemed unapproachable to persons who saw only his stern exterior. Even most of his disciples were so much awed by his stature and uncompromising spirit that they considered themselves unworthy of, and even feared, coming very close to him. Particularly as the mission expanded, newer *śiṣyas* had very little or no opportunity to personally interrelate or even speak with him, nor was it expected that they directly approach him. Gradually he dealt only with an inner coterie of senior disciples who oversaw the activities of the mission. Yet junior devotees did not feel deprived of his affection or mercy, for they appreciated his leading disciples as channels of, not barriers to, his magnanimity. And indeed the heart of the lion guru was exceedingly tender, as demonstrated in his genuine affection and sympathy for his disciples.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was solicitous for both the spiritual and physical welfare of his *śiṣyas*. Had he not been, few could have left their homes, for Indian families are traditionally tight-knit, and especially Bengali mothers are gushily doting and coddling to their sons. But Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was more affectionate than millions of mothers.[*] Many disciples if feeling disturbed or discouraged experienced immediate dissipation of their cares simply by entering his presence, and immediately derived renewed inspiration, enthusiasm, and confidence. Sometimes when he noticed *śiṣyas* looking pained or depressed, he would affectionately speak Kṛṣṇa-*kathā* to them and rid them of all distress. And whenever he left a place even for a few days, his sincere disciples' hearts ached in separation, each longing for his swift return.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura regularly assured his *śiṣyas* that simply by adhering to his instructions every one of them could attain Vaikuṇṭha in this life: "One can attain perfection in one lifetime by giving up independence, being surrendered, and sincerely worshiping the Lord under the guru's guidance."[15] And he promised that if those who remained faithful to him did not attain the topmost goal in this lifetime, then if required he would come birth after birth to help them. Yet he would also say:

> All of you should finish your business in this lifetime. Why wait for another? Become fully Kṛṣṇa conscious and go back to Godhead this very time. Don't risk waiting for another life, for there is no certainty.[16]

> If we do not attain liberation in this lifetime, we will have to again take birth. Why is it that we do not even wish to become free from such an inconvenience?[17]

> We may not always have an equivalent opportunity. As long as one is alive, take advantage and worship Hari in the association of Vaiṣṇavas.[18]
>
> We will not remain in this sphere for long. If we relinquish these bodies while continuously performing Hari-*kīrtana,* that will be the fulfilment of bearing them.[19]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī appreciated those disciples who in taking his mission to heart were prepared to undergo the difficulties that such dedication entailed. Knowing it to be for their benefit, he did not try to lighten their burden. He told them, "I have been shoved around in this world. Without giving the world similar shoves, neither can its ignorance be broken nor its people attracted to the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya. Those who do not get severely rough-handled by the world cannot worship the Lord."[20] Thus, no sincere servant of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī ever received even a drop or shadow of increased sense enjoyment from him.

By constantly pointing his disciples toward their ultimate benefit, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī tried his best to keep them steadily progressing toward perfection. As he once told Śrīmat Parvata Mahārāja, he noted the inclination and aptitude of individual devotees and accordingly recommended that they undertake particular kinds of services. He extended his association to his *śiṣyas* by regularly touring the Maṭhas and organizing festivals in various branches. By having his leading preachers speak at these festivals, and by sending them touring throughout the land, he gave further opportunities for his scattered followers to avail of advanced association.

Wanting that their *sevā* not be unnecessarily hampered, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was concerned with his disciples' physical needs. Often he would ask them whether they had taken *mahā-prasāda.* Sometimes, shortly after the *maṭha-vāsīs* retired at night, he would check to see if they were sleeping under mosquito nets, and if not, he would personally hang nets so they could sleep soundly and avoid contracting malaria. If in winter he saw a disciple without warm clothing he would ask the managers to provide some, or directly give some of his own. When sending disciples to England, he had distinguished-looking long coats made for them to protect from the cold.[*]

When the managers at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha wanted to send home an inmate stricken with tuberculosis, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī proposed that his own quarters be accorded to the afflicted devotee. After that the managers constructed a new building specifically for sick *maṭha-vāsīs.*

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's general habit was to indicate a desire rather than command a disciple to fulfil it. For example, often with his magazine-editing staff he would discuss in detail philosophical points and rebuttals of opposing theories, and while it was understood that he was outlining a draft for an article, he was more likely to say, "It would be good if something were written," than to order it done. For his personal needs also, he communicated by indication rather than verbally—for instance, looking pointedly at his empty glass to convey that he wanted water. His intimate disciples were familiar with these gestures and would act

accordingly, without having to be told.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī became perturbed when errant disciples left the mission and lapsed into their former ways. In some cases he sent other devotees to try to reclaim their associate. He became so heartbroken upon hearing of the apostasy of a sannyasi disciple that he began to cry, appealing to Mahāprabhu, "Why did You give me the inspiration to award that soul *sannyāsa* if You were not prepared to protect him from *māyā*? I have no power. I am helpless. I resign. I will no longer do this service." Although deeply disappointed, after some time he adjusted his feelings and again resolved to continue the preaching tussle.

Once Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī traveled with an entourage to install deities at a new Maṭha. Although pleased with the construction and preparations for the festival, he noted the absence of one *brahmacārī* disciple who had been residing there and inquired about him. The devotees related that the *brahmacārī* had been misbehaving with a neighboring woman, and one night after being severely reviled by his senior godbrothers, had decamped with all his belongings. They were sorry that he was gone, but being busy with preparations for the temple opening, had no time to search for him.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura sorrowfully commented, "It is difficult to bring a person from the torpor of *māyā* into the realm of devotion. After eons of floundering in the waves of worldly distress a rare fortunate soul might at last approach the shore. To again push him back into the ocean is most heinous. A *jīva* came to us, yet somehow we have sent him back to suffer. That one soul means more to me than all these buildings and other arrangements you have made." On hearing this his disciples also became remorseful. Suddenly Hayagrīva Prabhu said, "I know where to look for him. One day a devotee's watch broke and he immediately repaired it. He must be working in a watch shop."

The devotees then scoured the city and finally found their absconding godbrother repairing watches in the back room of a shop. He began crying and said, "Kṛṣṇahas answered my prayer. I have been miserable since I left the Maṭha, but was too embarrassed to return. I have been praying to Kṛṣṇa day and night that by any means He again bring me to Him." The devotees responded, "Yes, you will have to come back because Guru-mahārāja is greatly missing you." Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was delighted to see his lost disciple, who became overwhelmed by the compassion of his inconceivably merciful master.

A seemingly sincere *brahmacārī* left the association of devotees and stopped following devotional practices. Although he returned shortly and was pardoned, before long he was moved on, this time to the Madras Maṭha. But he did not improve, and was soon driven out by Śrīmat Tīrtha Mahārāja. After toiling in the material world for some time, he came to know that Tīrtha Mahārāja had left Madras, so he again begged for readmittance. Feeling reluctant, the *maṭha-rakṣaka* advised him to personally ask Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who was due to visit shortly. When Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura arrived, the straggling disciple pled for another chance. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura refused to approbate his misbehavior and dismissed him—but then immediately called the *maṭha-rakṣaka* and requested him to accept that devotee back in the

ashram and personally oversee him. The *maṭha-rakṣaka* asked how one could extend such mercy to a godbrother whom their spiritual master had not forgiven. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura replied by citing the pastime of Kāla Kṛṣṇa dāsa, who had been rejected by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu yet was later shown mercy by Nityānanda Prabhu, who had him deliver news of Lord Caitanya to His devotees in Bengal.[21] He explained, "The duty of a guru is to establish principles and exemplify proper behavior. But it is his servants' duty to be even more merciful than the spiritual master himself."

Echoing an analogy given by his own guru-*mahārāja,* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura often admonished disciples not to "purchase a round-trip ticket" while approaching a guru, but to come with the vow to forever remain in his shelter.

Once Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was approached by three *brahmacārīs* who appeared to want to say something but were hesitating. When he encouraged them to reveal their minds, they blurted out, "For many years we have been with the mission, yet we feel that we haven't made any spiritual progress." "Do you really mean this?" he asked. "Yes," they replied. "As far as we can judge, we honestly feel that we are not advancing." He then told them in a satisfied tone, "If you thought that you possessed Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti,* then there would be danger, for one who thinks he has *bhakti* certainly does not have it." Gaining fresh resolve, those three *brahmacārīs* remained in the mission for the rest of their lives.

A *brahmacārī* serving at Śrī Brahma Gauḍīya Maṭha in Ālālanātha was perpetually busy in service and never seen to relax. Doubting this *brahmacārī's* motives, another devotee suggested to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura that the *brahmacārī* was mundanely attached to his service and environs. To test him, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura called for that devotee and suggested that he be re-posted. "Yes, Guru-mahārāja. When shall I go?" came the unhesitating response. Then Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura said, "No, you may remain here. I just wanted to see if you had developed any local attachment. But now I am assured that you are ready to do whatever is required for service, so you need not leave."

When on a hot day a young disciple began to fan him, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī asked, "Why are you all of a sudden fanning me?" The boy replied, "Because if you are satisfied then all of us are satisfied." And on another hot day in Māyāpur, Śrī Amṛtānanda Sevā-vilāsa Brahmacārī was holding an umbrella over Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī to protect him from the sun, yet being considerably shorter, could not keep the umbrella from hitting his spiritual master's head. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī joked, "He is killing me with his umbrella." A taller devotee took over.

Once a different Sevā-vilāsa and another *brahmacārī* simultaneously brought some *sandeśa* (a milk sweet) to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Next day they asked if he had taken some. "Yes," he answered. When they asked, "Which one did you like best?" he said, "The one brought by Sevā-vilāsa. The other tasted like wax."

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī melted the hearts of those disciples engaged in book

production, his helping hands in playing the *bṛhat-mṛdaṅga,* by telling them, “I am a sannyasi and have no wealth with which to pay you, so allow me to recompense you simply with gratefulness.” He wrote and published pieces extolling the glories of and expressing appreciation for certain leading disciples.*

Even long after Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura ceased practicing *jyotiṣa,* he sometimes requested a disciple to show his palm. When he looked at Jati Śekhara Prabhu's he commented on the *cakra* (formation resembling a wheel) in the lower left corner of the right palm: “You will be expert in writing and speaking to lacerate nondevotional ideas.” On another occasion, upon inspecting a *brahmacārī's* hands he told him, “You must marry. You will not be able to remain a *brahmacārī.*”

A *brāhmaṇa* cook at the Yogapīṭha was so quarrelsome that he argued with everyone except Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī himself. Then he died young. After the obsequies were completed, several *brahmacārīs* were sitting together spinning yarns about the run-ins they had had with him. Suddenly Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī appeared in the doorway and interjected, “But he always washed his dhoti nicely and was very clean.” From then on nobody dared say anything negative about that departed *brāhmaṇa.*

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī sometimes demonstrated mercy upon disciples by deflating their false pride. Particularly if a newcomer was swollen-headed, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī first had him perform menial tasks like washing pots. An educated young man who came to serve in the Śrī Caitanya Maṭha asked Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī which activities to perform, yet upon being assigned to clean up after meals he objected, “But I'm an M.A. I can do more important work than that.” Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī explained, “Yes, therefore you should perform humble service to get free from the hubris of being an M.A.” And after an accomplished scholar intending to join the mission listed his material qualifications, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī sent him to shovel dung in the cowshed.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura expressed grief when disciples and others dear to him passed away, and in some cases became much afflicted. Yet he tempered such anguish with philosophical insight, reminding everyone that all in this world are destined to undergo the same trial.

His Admonishment and Leniency

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was strict. Often he would immediately and strongly upbraid a *śiṣya* for even a minor fault, without concern for possibly displeasing him. Yet his disciples liked it. A reprimanded devotee would happily inform other godbrothers, for his trouncing was considered indicative of being fully accepted by their spiritual master. Among the *śiṣyas* there was a saying that two things were sweet: *prabhupādera* dal (Prabhupāda's *mahā-prasāda* dal remnants) and *prabhupādera gāl* (Prabhupāda's scolding). His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami recalled, "When our spiritual master used to chastise, we took it as a blessing. That was very nice. And he would chastise like anything—Damn rascal! Foolish! Stupid!—all good words."[22]

This happy acceptance of their spiritual master's discipline sprung from the understanding that such severeness was actually a blessing, similar to being rebuked by the Supreme Lord Himself. As described in *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata:*

> *caitanyera-daṇḍa mahā-sukṛti se pāya*
> *yāṅra daṇḍe marile vaikuṇṭhe loka yāya*
>
> *caitanyera-daṇḍa ye mastake kari' laya*
> *sei daṇḍa tā're prema-bhakti-yoga haya*
>
> *caitanyera-daṇḍe yā're citte nāhi bhaya*
> *janme janme se pāpiṣṭha yama-daṇḍya haya*
>
> Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's punishment is an immense blessing, for anyone killed by the Lord attains the spiritual world. One who sincerely accepts the Lord's chastisement attains *prema-bhakti,* while a sinful person who does not fear the Lord's punishment will suffer the retribution of Yamarāja birth after birth. (Cb 2.11.78–80)

Yet Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura did not always castigate erring *śiṣyas.* Often their foibles were corrected simply by the greatness of his personality, for they would feel ashamed to act wrongly in his presence. Many times Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura just sorrowfully reproached peccant disciples—"This is not good; you should not do this"—and that was enough to chasten them. And sometimes he would address even serious *anarthas* or those prominent in senior disciples not by directly discussing with or chastising the persons involved, but in a public lecture analyzing such discrepancies in terms of the lack of Hari-*sevonmukhatā* (inclination for serving Hari) that lay at the root of the problem.

In Dacca some householder devotees complained to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī about one Tribhuvana Brahmacārī, who regularly slept until well past sunrise and missed the entire morning routine of spiritual activities. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī responded, "He may do that, but you should not." Expecting but not receiving reprimand from his guru-*mahārāja,*

Tribhuvana nevertheless rectified himself.[23]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura did not approve of his *śiṣyas'* assuming a lofty position and correcting others. Usually whenever someone complained to him about a compatriot he would reply, "He is unfortunate because he has done wrong, and you also are unfortunate because you got involved in it." He wrote to a disciple who had a tendency to be overly captious:

> It is stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that by criticizing others one becomes deviated from his own best interest, by his entanglement in illusory dualities.[24] And in *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* it is similarly stated that by criticizing others one goes to hell.[25] My instruction is to not criticize the nature of others, but to try to amend yourself. Although I am compelled to rebuke my disciples and those who have come to me for guidance, I don't understand why you would go out of your way to perform such a troublesome task.[26]

Any *maṭha-vāsī* who was repeatedly misbehaved or offensive was sent to the Maṭha in the remote village of Māmgāchi, to work hard in tending the many cows and large garden. Thus Māmgāchi Maṭha became jokingly known as "the prison of the Gauḍīya Maṭha." But inmates of this "prison" could gain the mercy of Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura and thereby gradually improve.[*] Likewise, dispatchment during winter to the Maṭha in mountainous Darjeeling was considered a "punishment."

When Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was once staying at Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha, news came from Bhubaneswar that *maṅgala-ārati* at the Tridaṇḍī Maṭha was regularly delayed until after sunrise because the *pūjārī* tarried so long in his morning duties. Without consulting Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, one senior sannyasi sent for the sannyasi in charge of Tridaṇḍī Maṭha, berated him, and told him to wait outside in the hot sun. Hearing this, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī came outside from his adjacent house and scolded the senior sannyasi: "Why have you summoned him without consulting me? Don't call anyone without first asking me."

When Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was requested by a disciple named Hari Kiśora to "please recite Hari-*kathā* to me," he replied, "First clear your ear." In the same manner, when asked by his often frivolous *śiṣya* Śrī Guṇamaṇi dāsa to speak Hari-*kathā,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī riposted with a sarcastic euphony—*guṇamaṇi āmi gāya tui śun:* "Guṇamaṇi, I speak, you hear."

A sannyasi disciple was once severely punished by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura for a seemingly venial offense. Without taking permission or blessings from him, that sannyasi left his prescribed engagement and started on a Gaṅgā *parikramā,* a lengthy outing that would span several months. On returning to the plains from Badrinātha he visited Kurukṣetra, where the Vyāsa Gauḍīya Maṭha had recently been established. He was astonished when the *maṭha-rakṣaka,* the newly initiated Rāmendra Sundara Vraja-vāsī, haltingly denied him entry to the Maṭha compound. Rāmendra Prabhu explained that he was simply executing orders issued through a letter from Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu, drafted at the behest of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Upon seeing the letter, that sannyasi began to rail at Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu: "After over fifteen years in the mission, for only a few days I went for *darśana* of Badri-nārāyaṇa and now am being banned from the Maṭha. What sort of draconian inequity is this?" Rāmendra nervously admitted, "I am very much afraid." "Why is that?" the sannyasi asked. "Because if your service of more than fifteen years has come to this, then what hope is there for me? Why should I remain serving the mission?" Hearing that, the sannyasi's mood changed, and to hearten Rāmendra Prabhu he spoke in support of the institution. He further reasoned that even though one person may fail a higher examination, it does not mean that another who is successful in a lower class will not eventually be able to pass at the higher level. "I might have failed, but why should you?" he proferred. "You must go forward enthusiastically and overcome all obstacles." These words helped Rāmendra Prabhu regain the courage to persevere.

Ultimately that sannyasi was accepted back into the mission, yet was demoted to the status of *vānaprastha* and renamed Badri-nārāyaṇa dāsa.[27]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī once complained to a sannyasi disciple, "You are not my servant, but an agent of the people. You have come to me seeking an opportunity or privilege. You consider, 'So many men are under me, and on their behalf I shall plead to our guru-*mahārāja.*' That apparently also is devotion, but is dangerous. Will you always be able to execute the order of your guru-*mahārāja*? Your primary and most intimate connection should be with your guru-*mahārāja,* not others. You should think, 'Only on his behalf am I approaching the public, never on their behalf. I will simply represent the superior authority and not thereby search after men, money, or fame.' It is a great temptation for a preacher to covet the position of *ācārya,* yet such desires will pull him down from the platform of zenith purity." And toward the end of his stay in this world Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura told that same sannyasi, who then had been twenty years in the mission and fifteen years a sannyasi, "You have not seen me. You do not know who I am."[28]

Sometimes upon noticing a disciple sleeping during class Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would reprehend him, "Stand up! Go wash your face. My guru-*mahārāja* is present, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is present, all the *ācāryas* are present. You are insulting them by sleeping." Once when a *brahmacārī* was dozing in class Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī said he should be thrown in Rādhā-kuṇḍa, adding, "I have invited my guru and all the *ācāryas* here, but if they see you sleeping they will go away. Why embarrass me by sleeping?"[*]

At night Śrīpāda Jagannātha Brahmacārī of Saccidānanda Maṭha to stay in a thatched shelter in the garden to forfend against thieves. Even in winter he reposed there while the other *maṭha-vāsīs* slept indoors with warm bedding. Jagannātha would boast, "I'm such a *brahmacārī* that I can sleep outside in the winter without blankets." When Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī heard of this he ordered him to sleep inside and wear suitable clothes—another *brahmacārī* would take over the night shift. Jagannātha Prabhu replied, "No, I'm the only one who can do it." Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī responded, "Their disease is that they don't like to stay in the garden. Your disease is that you don't like to stay in the house." Jagannātha Brahmacārī had to

acquiesce.

Once when Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was offering *daṇḍavat* before the deities at Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, a visitor coming for *darśana* stood just beside where Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's head was touching the floor. Seeing this, several devotees yelled at the man for standing so close to their guru's head. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura rebuked them: "He is an outsider and may not know all the rules. Don't discourage him. Why do all ten of you have to holler at once? One of you could have gone to him personally and politely advised him. Your behavior was insulting."[29]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī once admonished Jati Śekhara Prabhu for loudly tolling the bell during *ārati:* "You are inattentive to the *kīrtana.* You are intent only on clanging the bell." He quoted *śaṅkha bāje ghaṇṭā bāje madhura madhura madhura bāje:* "The conch and bell sound sweet"—unlike Jati Śekhara Prabhu's banging.[30]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī once asked Kṛṣṇa Babu, an Oriya disciple with an unabashed bias against Bengalis, "Do you think that if you go to the jungle in Orissa, the tigers will not eat you? Do you think they will embrace you because you are Oriya?"

When during a festival at Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha a *gṛhastha* sat with his family for *mahā-prasāda,* a *brahmacārī* rebuked him: "You hardly gave a few paise yet have come with your whole household." Hearing this Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura told the *brahmacārī,* "Don't count how many people come. They may or may not give. Let all come and take *mahā-prasāda*." Although the *gṛhastha* was not well-to-do, he and his entire family were devotees. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura considered someone who donated little but honored *mahā-prasāda* more fortunate than major donors who did not come to take *mahā-prasāda*. He regarded as *antaryāmī-prerita* (sent by Paramātmā) unknown persons who came to the Maṭha at the time of honoring *mahā-prasāda,* and had them fed or even personally served them. Yet he did not approve of persons coming regularly to fill their bellies without performing Hari-*sevā.*

For a time in 1933 several from the congregation were coming daily to take *mahā-prasāda* at Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha. Some *maṭha-vāsīs* felt that only those lay devotees who performed sufficient service should regularly be given full meals of *mahā-prasāda;* other inmates felt that anyone should be allowed to take *mahā-prasāda* without restriction. The objectors brought this matter to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's attention by citing the case of Manik, an initiated householder who regularly came for *mahā-prasāda.* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī commented that Manik primarily viewed *mahā-prasāda* as free food rather than Kṛṣṇa's mercy. He told Manik, "Don't come here just to eat. At least do some service if you are going to take *mahā-prasāda* every day at the Maṭha."

Śrī-bhūṣaṇa Brahmacārī bathed five times a day and frequently washed his hands. He was punctilious in observing hygienic praxes, such as washing his feet and lower legs upon returning to the Maṭha from outside. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura told him, "Our dharma is not bathing, but chanting the holy names. Don't waste time. Keep life simple and make time for chanting. Don't spend so much time for bodily maintenance. Bathing is required, but not

excessively."

Although the lion guru stood for the highest ideals and unabashedly spoke against cheating in the name of religion, as an *uttama-adhikārī* Vaiṣṇava his natural tendency was to be *adoṣa-darśī,* unmindful of others' faults. And maybe also out of pragmatism, he sometimes indulged disciples in less-than-ideal behavior.

The editor of *Ananda Bazar Patrika* once told Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, "I see many hypocrites in your mission. They are not sincere. What they say and what they do are not the same. Why not put them out? Let them go home and get married, or whatever. Why keep them in your Maṭha?" Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī replied, "O editor, you will save me! Is there any better place to uplift them than here? Whether they be good or bad, if their fortune allows they will become good. If not, what can I do?" To another person who questioned him similarly, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī revealed, "They have been with me for several years now, and for better or worse I have developed affection for them. After such a long time I cannot simply turn them out."[31] *

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī could be scaldingly sarcastic, as in the following missive to devotees who had sold Maṭha land:

> Whereas Mahāprabhu's garden should have been developed, you have instead distributed all its land. Especially in the rainy season there could have been good cultivation for Mahāprabhu's service, for which that land was given to the Maṭha, but now you have put it outside the Maṭha. After some days you will make Him like Jagannātha, by removing His arms and contracting His legs.[32] †

Handling Disputes

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had a novel technique to purify *śiṣyas* at loggerheads with each other: at convocations of the Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā in Māyāpur, he would order them to give public speeches of mutual praise.

At his Vyāsa-*pūjā* in 1931 Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura spoke extensively about the inauspiciousness and inappropriateness of finding faults in Vaiṣṇavas, including:

> This life has a short duration. Last year we met at this place for the purpose of worshiping the lotus feet of Śrī Guru. Those to whom Godhead has been merciful have departed from here, while we continue to be actively engaged in this realm of Devī in the enjoyment of the objects of this world, for the purpose of seeking out the defects of other people, and becoming thereby an object lesson of absence of the quality of humility greater than that of the blade of grass.
>
> The lotus feet of Śrī Guru abstains from seeing the defects of other people. Yet there is no other function of the lotus feet of Śrī Guru than to constantly point out my hundreds of thousands of defects and to caution me constantly against any evil that is likely to befall me. May we not be deprived of the ideal of the lotus feet of Śrī Guru. If I live again for another year from today I shall serve Śrī Guru at every moment. I will give up criticizing other people. I am given to belittling other people. "I am very clever. I am very learned, very intelligent. I am a great speaker. That person is illiterate, foolish, cannot properly talk about anything." If we try to diminish the practice of discussing in this manner the defects of other people, and discourse about Hari, instead, I think it would do us good. Nevertheless we must never show any regard for aversion to Godhead.[33]

When returning by train to Calcutta from a tour in Midnapore District in April 1919, an accompanying devotee tried to provoke an argument with Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu, but Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura instructed him that hostility toward devotees should always be avoided.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī once heard the sound of quarrel reverberating from the *brahmacārī* ashram of the *maṭha* he was present in and came to see what the ruckus was about. Upon seeing their *gurudeva* at the door, the squabbling devotees stopped their racket and offered *daṇḍavat.* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī said, "It is not actually your fault; it is mine. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu required His associates to give up everything to become mendicants. But I took you off the street and housed you in big temples, so naturally you will fight."[34]

Generally Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī did not get involved in disputes between his disciples. He preferred to remain aloof, or sometimes had Vāsudeva Prabhu intercede and give a decision.

A schism once developed between certain *gṛhastha* disciples and a group of sannyasis and

brahmacārīs. The latter assumed themselves more renounced and dedicated, and referred to those who lived at home without doing much service to the Maṭha as *pacā* (rotten) *gṛhasthas;* the householders claimed superiority because their donations were supporting the mission. The issue came to a head in an *iṣṭa-goṣṭhī* convened to discuss the question, whereat Vāsudeva Prabhu quoted:

> *yei bhaje sei baḍa, abhakta—hīna, chāra*
> *kṛṣṇa-bhajane nāhi jāti-kulādi-vicāra*
>
> Anyone who takes to *bhajana* is exalted, whereas a nondevotee is condemned and abominable. In Kṛṣṇa-*bhajana* there is no consideration of caste or family status. (Cc 3.4.67)
>
> *cāri varṇāśramī yadi kṛṣṇa nāhi bhaje*
> *svakarma karite se raurave paḍi' maje*
>
> Followers of the *varṇāśrama* institution accept the regulative principles of the four social orders (*brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya,* and *śūdra*) and four spiritual orders (*brahmacarya, gṛhastha, vānaprastha,* and *sannyāsa*). However, if one executes the regulative principles of these orders but does not render transcendental service to Kṛṣṇa, he falls into hell. (Cc 2.22.26)
>
> *ya eṣāṁ puruṣaṁ sākṣād ātma-prabhavam īśvaram*
> *na bhajanty avajānanti sthānād bhraṣṭāḥ patanty adhaḥ*
>
> If any members of the four *varṇas* and *āśramas* fail to worship, or intentionally disrespect, the Personality of Godhead, the source of their creation, they will fall from their position. (SB 11.5.3)

He concluded that social standing is not a factor in *bhakti,* which depends rather upon a devotee's level of commitment to and absorption in unmotivated service, not any external designation. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura acknowledged this verdict and further commented that a devotee's goal is to join the family of Nanda Mahārāja in the spiritual world. And in a letter, he addressed other issues causing disagreement between *maṭha-vāsīs* and householder disciples:

> I observe that some difference is arising between *maṭha-vāsīs* and householders, both considering themselves superior devotees. We can see from the realization expressed by Śrīdhara Mahārāja at Delhi that our only worshipable objects are Bhagavān and His devotees. Only by serving Bhagavān and His devotees can our inclination to serve our own family whittle. But if those residing in *śrī-dhāma* adopt the outlook of the Kuliyā *sahajiyās* and, considering themselves greater devotees, take the servants of the Maṭha to be their own servitors, then instead of thinking how to serve the *dhāma* they will deem themselves the objects of worship of Vaikuṇṭha.

> *Dhāma-vāsa* is meant for serving devotees. Therefore, if instead of serving the Lord and His devotees they harbor some expectation from devotees and express dissatisfaction with them, then instead of doing *śrī-dhāma-sevā* (service to the *dhāma*) they commit the offense of *śrī-dhāma-bhoga* (enjoying the *dhāma*). Instead of enjoying the *dhāma,* one should live in some other enjoyable place and from a distance serve devotees of the *dhāma.* If *maṭha-vāsīs* do not presently have means to liquidate their financial debt to those who want to enjoy *śrī-dhāma,* then in future they may try to return the contributions so the donors can live in comfort. A list should be kept of the amount each has spent in his effort to enjoy the *dhāma.*[35]

From another letter:

> Many *gṛhasthas,* finding it troublesome to donate to the Maṭha, remain busy in finding faults in its renounced inmates. It is natural that as long as one is not a *maṭha-vāsī,* he will see faults in the *maṭha-vāsīs.* Precept by the practice of tolerance is a prime duty of *maṭha-vāsīs.*[36]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would quote *pāṅca putra saṅge nāce rāya bhavānanda tina putra saṅge nāce sena śivānanda* (Bhavānanda Rāya dances with his five sons and Śivānanda Sena with his three sons) and explain, "That Bhavānanda Rāya and Śivānanda Sena each had several children did not detract from their glories. They are not ordinary people; they are associates of the Supreme Personality of Godhead."[37] He would also quote from Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, *smara goṣṭhi-saha karṇapūra sena śivānanda ajasra smara smara re:* "Just remember Kavi-karṇapūra and all his family members, particularly his father, Śivānanda Sena. Always remember. O, always remember."[38] He would emphasize *ajasra smara* (always remember): "They are all pure devotees of the Supreme Lord, so always remember them with great reverence." Through these songs he taught his *brahmacārīs* and sannyasis to not have ill feelings against *gṛhastha* devotees.[39]

Some disputes between disciples were on a high philosophical level. When an eclipse occurred during Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's last sojourn in Purī, Vāsudeva Prabhu suddenly ridiculed the description in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* of eclipses being the demonic planet Rāhu devouring either the sun or moon. Śrīmad B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja responded that even though Vyāsadeva and Śukadeva's description of eclipses seems physically impossible, their statements appear within *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* and the literal meaning of *śāstra* is not to be facetiously dismissed. Śrīdhara Mahārāja offered an analogy: "In *Jaiva Dharma* Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura created various persona, who I think are not imaginary. What he has written might have occurred during some other day of Brahmā, and that is now being revealed." In this instance Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura did not support Vāsudeva Prabhu, but approved Śrīdhara Mahārāja's argument.

Tergiversators

Not all who became attracted to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī remained so. Some who had initially shown interest or sought shelter of his lotus feet later regressed, a few even joining opposing *apa-sampradāyas* or becoming viciously inimical. Yet Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī never became disheartened. Rather, he reassured the many more who stayed that "a fight is a fight, so some soldiers will die."

A group of students who had attended the 1913 Kashimbazar Sammilanī in Kuliyā later sought out Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī in Māyāpur, who thereupon delivered to them a blistering indictment of the *apa-sampradāyas* and declared his firm resolve to drive these quasi-Vaiṣṇavas out of existence. One of the students, Śrī Satyendra-candra Mitra, replied with reciprocal zeal, "If you so order and empower us, we shall pawn our lives for obliterating these cheaters and bringing in a new age of Vaiṣṇavism. The impossible can become possible by the power of a great personage like yourself." But after visiting Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī two or three times more, his reformist fervor was instead channeled into a leadership role with the Indian independence movement.

Dharma, a paid servant from Purī who had tended to Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's personal needs for several years, was ultimately dismissed for serious misconduct. But he returned shortly, deathly sallow from liver disorder. Paramānanda Prabhu, directed by Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī to care for Dharma, spent much time and money in treating him. When fully cured, the penitent Dharma vowed to dedicate the rest of his life in service to Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī, who had restored both his physical and spiritual life.

Yet before long Dharma started mixing with a corrupt local, in whose company he took to drinking, rumor-mongering, and other vices. He soon left the association of devotees to live with a Muslim of wicked character, who incited him to submit a police complaint that the newly established Śrī Caitanya Maṭha had not paid him due wages. Despite there being no evidence, the magistrate was swayed by Dharma's facile tears and ruled in his favor; and when a government pleader motioned for a review of the case, the magistrate upheld his original judgment. On that very day, a son of the man who had instigated Dharma died.

Shortly thereafter Dharma became a Muslim, and within a few more days was attacked by excruciating stomach pains. For six months he endured unspeakable suffering, then one day collapsed beneath a tree and gaspingly admitted his guilt before the villagers who had gathered. Then he died. As for the magistrate, on the day following his final decree, his dearmost one-and-only brother expired, which affected him so deeply that he was never again able to hear any cases.

Impressed with Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's personality and presentation of *siddhānta,* in 1916 an educated and renounced young man came to join him at the Yogapīṭha, and started performing intense *bhajana.* But upon noting that Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī spent considerable time in

keeping careful records of the accounts, that young man harshly criticized him and left to seek another sadhu. To other followers for whom this occasioned a crisis of faith, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī wrote:

> May Kṛṣṇa forgive his gaffs. Don't write to that so-called *brahmacārī.* He is fallen. Such a sad fate awaits those who offend Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet and act independently. All of you, chant Kṛṣṇa's name unceasingly. Recite Vaiṣṇava literature without committing offenses. He has fallen into Satan's hands, but we shall not give up Hari-*sevā.* We wish him all the best in every birth, though we cannot envisage any good fortune for him in this life. He left me in an exceedingly hardhearted manner. Do not be rattled upon seeing his misfortune. I know that foolish people will blame me for this incident. I hope that you have passed Satan's tests and are fearlessly chanting *harināma.* Even if without faith, continue chanting most attentively.[40]

One of Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's earliest disciples regularly crossed the Gaṅgā from Māyāpur to Kuliyā to visit Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī. He adjudged Bābājī Mahārāja to be absorbed in internal bliss on a level of renunciation and realization far superior to that of Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī, who was ever concerned with preaching and always talking of and dealing in apparently worldly affairs. Since Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī had accepted Bābājī Mahārāja as guru, this disciple thought it better to directly associate with him. Acting on this hunch, he became an imitative follower of Bābājī Mahārāja, yet soon degraded to the status of a *kāpālika,* a type of tantric sannyasi who carries a skull and trident.[*]

Early in 1917 one Śrī Nārāyaṇa dāsa Chattopādhyāya, a lame youth with literary aspirations, came to the Bhāgavata Press and showed samples of his poetry to Paramānanda. Considering it rather pallid, staccato, and amorphous, Paramānanda showed the boy examples of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's consummate phrasing and further advised him to approach Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī for spiritual tutelage. Nārāyaṇa dāsa complied, whereupon Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī mercifully spoke Hari-*kathā* to him at length. On Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's order Nārāyaṇa dāsa wrote for *Sajjana-toṣaṇī,* his compositions being regularly published. And while Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī sojourned in Kuliyā, Nārāyaṇa dāsa regularly attended his lectures. But after taking *sannyāsa,* Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī mostly stayed in Calcutta or Māyāpur or was on tour. Lacking guidance, Nārāyaṇa dāsa became consumed by bad association and the desire for name, fame, and wealth through writing—and soon died.

One time an unknown but clearly well educated man came to the Maṭha expressing a desire to join. Directed to wash pots, he scrubbed them exceptionally hard and clean. The devotees were surprised at his having accepted such a menial task, yet Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was unimpressed: “In a few days you will see what kind of service he is doing.” Eventually the man's wife came and the couple spoke privately, after which they left, never to return. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī commented, “After a spat with his wife, he came here and was scouring the vessels vigorously in anger, just waiting for her to come bring him home.”

In 1923 one *brāhmaṇa* started associating with the Gauḍīya Maṭha devotees, who treated him

respectfully but with caution, suspecting him to have ulterior motives and noticing his tendency toward *smārta* concepts of brahminical elitism. One day at the Cāṅpāhāṭi Maṭha, that *brāhmaṇa* fell on the veranda of the temple as if unconscious and lay there despite being bitten by large red ants. The Gauḍīya Maṭha devotees present simply ignored him, having previously witnessed many such *prākṛta-sahajiyā* displays of meretricious ecstasy meant for earning a reputation as an advanced devotee. After lying like this for a long time without eliciting any response, he got up and stalked off. Thenceforth he became an implacable enemy of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, enlisting the help of local newspapers in ventilating his animosity.

After some time, a kinsman of that *brāhmaṇa* came to Śrī Caitanya Maṭha to relate how the *brāhmaṇa* had died in torturous bodily and mental pain, and that as his life was ebbing away he had confided to his relatives that he could not imagine what future suffering awaited him for having offended the Gauḍīya Maṭha guru and other Vaiṣṇavas, lamenting, "Will that *ācārya* not forgive me now? There is no other hope for my deliverance." That relative further explained how formerly certain false sadhus had much cheated and harassed the *brāhmaṇa* and caused severe disturbance in his family life, for which his resentment had become illogically fixated on the Gauḍīya Maṭha.

Once a recidivist from the mission sent a letter to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura addressing him as *bhāi* and proposing that together they perform direct *bhajana* of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura dryly remarked that perhaps after union with Kṛṣṇa that ex-disciple was now bearing a child.

After being initiated and living in the Maṭha for some time, a devotee from Assam returned home, married, and forgot spiritual practices, maintaining no association with devotees and never chanting on beads. In course of time he died—or so it seemed. Just before the funeral pyre was lit, some grisly beings appeared within his mind. Panic-stricken, he remembered "Prabhupāda!"—upon which the Yamadūtas disappeared and all present became astonished as he arose.[*]

Three

Marriage and Family Life

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī emphasized that householders should not be materially attached to their families, but spiritually attached to Kṛṣṇa. He differentiated the *gṛha-vrata*—an ordinary worldly person addicted to the home-oriented bodily conception of existence, and thus sworn to sense enjoyment centered around marital life—from what he called the Kṛṣṇa-*vrata,* one whose being is dedicated to Kṛṣṇa.[*] By adopting the mood of a Vaiṣṇava *gṛhastha,* as expressed by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in songs such as those beginning '*āmāra' balite prabhu* and *mānasa deha geha yo kichu mora,* devotees should not consider themselves masters of their homes, nor should they be servants of their wives, but servants of the real master, Kṛṣṇa.[†] They should loosen their domestic moorings and become purified by regularly serving and hearing from the *maṭha-vāsīs.* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī did not think it sufficient that *gṛhasthas* simply practice basic *sādhana* at home; he exhorted them to dedicate at least as much energy in serving Hari as they did for satisfying their kin, and taught that Hari-*sevā* was best conducted in conjuction with the Maṭha:

> We will not be benefitted by making a show of worshiping the Lord while remaining averse to serving *maṭha-vāsīs* engaged in Kṛṣṇa-*kīrtana.* By respectfully serving *maṭha-vāsīs* we become qualified to chant the holy name—that is, our taste for chanting will increase. If we instead remain absorbed in serving bodily relatives, we will not be able to chant *harināma.* But if *gṛhastha* devotees, by the strength gained from *sādhu-saṅga* and *bhajana,* can get free from the sense of being the doer, and of household attachments, then instead of considering their family members objects of personal enjoyment, they will be able to understand them as meant for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure, and thus will be benefited.[1]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura exhorted *gṛhastha* disciples to keep Kṛṣṇa in the center of their family by developing Goloka-*darśana* rather than *jagad-darśana:*

> Do not see your fathers and mothers as a means to your own sense gratification, but as Kṛṣṇa's fathers and mothers. Do not see your sons as a means to your personal enjoyment, but as belonging to the group of servitors of Bāla Gopāla. Engage your eyes in seeing the *kadamba* tree, the river Yamunā and its sandy bank, and the beauty of the full moon.[*] Then you won't have any more mundane feelings. You will see Goloka, and the splendor of Goloka will be manifest in your home. Hence you will not have any material feelings for your home. You will be relieved from propensities for ordinary householder life.[2†]

At a *gṛha-praveśa* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura explained the proper understanding of this ritual of entering a house for the first time:

> Those who enter into household life following the rules of the external world will be increasingly absorbed in illusion. Entering the *gṛhastha-āśrama,* and *gṛha-praveśa,* are as

essential for *gṛhastha* devotees as is entering the *sannyāsa-āśrama* [for other devotees]. *Gṛha-praveśa* should be celebrated only by a devotee, not a nondevotee. When a devotee enters his house we should know that he has actually entered his *maṭha*. One should enter one's house only for serving and thinking of Kṛṣṇa and making everything conducive for that. A *gṛhastha* should always avoid bad association and gossip. He should carefully nurture such qualities as enthusiasm, determination, and patience, and devotional practices like hearing and chanting. The essential duties of a householder are to serve Hari-guru-Vaiṣṇavas, chant *śrī-nāma,* associate with sadhus, and hear about the Lord. If all his endeavors are directed toward Hari-*sevā* then a householder will definitely benefit, be protected, and fulfil the purpose of life.[3]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī did not encourage *brahmacārīs* to marry. Having left their homes and families to search after Kṛṣṇa, there should have been no question of their returning to family life. He particularly disliked if *brahmacārī* disciples who had donned red cloth, a sign of commitment to perpetual celibacy, later reneged. But if they were adamant, he allowed them to wed on the understanding that within their homes they would continue following the regulations of devotional life. He instructed that men should cohabit with their wives only for bringing forth Vaiṣṇava children, not for sense gratification.[4*]

Śrī Śambhu Babu of Calcutta had remarried after the death of his first wife, and spent all the dowry money for purchasing devotional books. Shortly after this second marriage, he approached Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī at Vrajapattana for advice on practicing *bhakti* as a *gṛhastha,* only to be told that family life is full of trammels to Hari-*bhajana.* The demoralized Śambhu Babu then crossed the river and in Kuliyā put the same query to Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī, who advised him to serve his wife, considering her a devotee, rather than be served by her. Unable to accept Bābājī Mahārāja's view, the now fully despondent Śambhu Babu returned to Calcutta.[5] Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura explained:

> Śambhu Babu thought, "Bābājī Mahārāja used to perform *bhajana* amid renunciation, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura amid enjoyment." But I did not acknowledge that opinion. I said, "The renunciation of Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya, Śrī Puṇḍarīka, Śrī Śivānanda Sena, and Śrī Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita are not different. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's path of *yukta-vairāgya* and Bābājī Mahārāja's path of *yukta-vairāgya* are not different. Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's son fixed in service and Śivānanda Sena's son serving Gaurāṅga are both Kṛṣṇa's sons, Kṛṣṇa's associates appearing through the *sandhinī-śakti.*[†] If one sees them materially, he commits offenses."

He further warned:

> One's home, which is the abode of his enjoyment, and the temple, the abode of Hari's service, are not identical. Therefore, serving the family is not the same as serving the Lord. The mentality of an attached householder and the propensity of a devotee to serve Hari are distinct. Of course for persons actually engaged in Hari-*bhajana,* the *maṭha* and their home are the same. And for those unable to practice Hari-*bhajana,* in both places they will

be disturbed by illusion.

If we think that serving our family is synonymous with serving Hari, then there is no possibility for spiritual advancement. As long as we remain attached to and focused on our temporary relatives and the life we build with them, it is impossible to serve Hari. If we are bound by such temporary mundane affections, then that affection will become the object of our service.[6]

Vaiṣṇavas are interested not in feeding poisonous snakes with milk and bananas, but in devotional service. Should they realize that family life has become incongenial for their devotional service, they leave home.[7*]

In the early days of the mission, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his entourage were invited by his disciple Śrī Haripada dāsa Adhikārī to the *anna-prāśana* ceremony for his child. Even though the rites were to be conducted according to the Gauḍīya methods of *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā* meant for the uplift of householders, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura declined to attend. He explained that participation in such social functions by *brahmacārīs* and sannyasis, both having renounced their former homes, would cause them to forget Kṛṣṇa and develop the disposition of an attached householder.

Yet Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was not against marriage per se. Once some dispirited *brahmacārīs* revealed, “When we first came to the Maṭha we felt much hope and enthusiasm by noticing our fellow devotees' high character and love for serving the Supreme Personality of Godhead, yet gradually that outlook became stunted. We have begun to think differently, seeing that several *brahmacārīs* have returned home to marry.” Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī replied:

I am unable to say that it becomes necessary to give up Hari-*sevā* when one becomes a householder. On my part I see all around us many wonderful Vaiṣṇavas. I find that their Hari-*bhakti* has grown substantially. What a big rascal I was! How much my impiety has diminished by associating with them! I find that although I am averse to Godhead, all of them are serving Hari. I have been enabled to know by the mercy of the lotus feet of Śrī Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī Prabhu that he never lent his ears to the tidings of condemnable actions of Vaiṣṇavas, and that it sufficed for him to know only that they serve Kṛṣṇa.

I find that everyone is serving Hari by making progress on the path of devotion. The household of Godhead has prospered in every way. To me alone has no benefit accrued. All have undoubtedly been benefited. You have become agitated by small insufficiencies. Your anxiety for serving Godhead is immense. It is for this reason that you want them to serve Hari in ever increased measure. You are unable to feel satisfied even though you and they are occupied in serving Hari. You want that they may serve the Lord with a billion-fold greater devotion. But my heart is small; my vessel is small. Thus I am unable to contain their Hari-*sevā* in my small vessel. Their endeavor for the service of Hari is

> overflowing my little cup. I feel it is no longer possible to keep within the limits of my small vessel the vastness of their Hari-*sevā.* They are setting an example of the most wonderfully ideal lives of service. I alone am unable to serve Hari. I alone am busy to detect the defects of others. I ought to have progressed on the path of service but instead have chosen to be busy in searching for the defects of Vaiṣṇavas.[8]

Once when a young man came to request blessings for matrimony Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura told him, "You become a disciple and take *harināma*. Marriage means to engage your family in devotion; otherwise it is bad. Covenant to be good, then your family will be good. Marriage is not absolutely required, but if you feel you must wed then stay virtuous by marrying. If you cannot keep your marriage pure, I do not sanction it." The young man heeded Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's words and accepted *harināma* from him.

Gṛhastha disciples who had received *dīkṣā* were expected to practice rigidly—for instance, by every evening participating in all programs in their local Maṭha. To a householder who had been attending infrequently, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī asked, "Why do you always remain at home chewing the chewed, engaged in inauspicious material undertakings?"[*]

Following the injunction of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī strongly recommended that householders perform *arcana*.[9] He stated that after *dīkṣā, gṛhasthas* should daily perform *arcana* and read *Gītā,* or otherwise would be considered fallen. His disciples from *brāhmaṇa* families that traditionally worshiped *śālagrāma-śilās* or Viṣṇu deities would be encouraged to continue doing so; others were expected to worship pictures of deities. Nearly all his householder disciples performed simple *arcana* of photos of the deities at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha or their local Maṭha.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī encouraged his *gṛhastha* disciples to beget children to increase the Vaiṣṇava community.[10] Although he was an *akhaṇḍa-brahmacārī* (strict celibate from birth) he would say, "If I could beget Kṛṣṇa conscious children I would be prepared to engage in sex a hundred times," apparently addressing the difficulty of raising offspring to be pure devotees. He also warned, "Only for the purpose of and at a suitable time for producing children should *gṛhasthas* relate sexually with their wives. It is improper to associate with women for fulfilling lust, a cause of obstacles in Hari-*bhakti.*"[11]

While the majority of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's *gṛhastha* disciples stayed at home with their families, those willing to live like *brahmacārīs* were allowed to reside at the Maṭha. Such *gṛhasthas* whose families had no means of financial support might receive a small stipend, if approved by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Śrī Jadumaṇi Pattnaik lived in Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha for most of his married life, yet when he became old he was advised by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to go back home: "Your family will be able to properly care for you. They are Vaiṣṇavas, so there will be no harm."

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura upheld that since the essence of *tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa* is dedication of mind, body, and words in service to Kṛṣṇa, a fully dedicated *gṛhastha* is also a *tridaṇḍī,* more

exalted than even the strictest of Māyāvādī sannyasis.

Dealings with Disciples' Relatives

Some entire families took to Hari-*bhakti* under the guidance of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī —for instance, that of Śrīmad Bhakti Svarūpa Bhaktisāra Mahārāja, whose parents also were initiated by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. Bhakti Rañjana and Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhus were other prominent devotees who were able to induce several of their relatives to accept *harināma* from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. But more commonly, family members were apprehensive, unsupportive, or downright opposed to any member of their clan taking to *śuddha-bhakti.*

Whenever family members of disciples visited the Maṭha, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī received them cordially and often spent considerable time with them to help dispell their unease or possible objections. It was not unusual for them to come in a troupe specifically to bring "their boy" back "home," sometimes scolding Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and his followers, typically with the womenfolk crying hysterically and swooning, and sometimes threatening suicide. If forewarned of such visits, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī might dispatch the particular new man with a traveling party or to a Maṭha in a remote location, or hide him before his relatives arrived. Then Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and other *maṭha-vāsīs* would profess to be unaware of the new *brahmacārī's* whereabouts, and the kinsfolk would have to leave disappointed. He cautioned his young men, "Beware the tears of Māyā trying to pull you to hell." He referred to those parents who resisted their sons' practicing Hari-*bhak*ti as "modern-day Hiraṇyakaśipus." Even if parents called the police to try to find their son, the undaunted Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would still keep him hidden away. Although this might have seemed callous, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī maintained that to have done otherwise would have been callous: "I cannot be so heartless, ungrateful, and mean as to send a person whose tendency to serve Kṛṣṇa has even slightly wakened, to again be tied like a sacrificial animal to the pole of matters not connected to Kṛṣṇa." He later remarked, "Had we not done so there would have been no Gauḍīya Maṭha."

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura referred to *sannyāsa* as "civil suicide," and defined *maṭha-vāsa* as considering oneself the son of the guru and thus maintaining no further link with material relatives.[12] Accordingly, many *maṭha-vāsīs* permanently snapped ties with their former homes, kinsfolk, and friends, especially if those persons were nondevotees and wanted to pull devotees back to secular life. Whenever correspondence came from "home" to a *brahmacārī* or sannyasi Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would say, "This is a missive from Māyā." And he instructed, "Don't write to your family; that is writing to Māyā. Red cloth signifies cutting worldly connections. You are a *brahmacārī;* remain always spiritual. *Brahma carati iti brahmacarya:* '*Brahmacarya* means to act on the spiritual platform.'" In a long letter to a newly inducted sannyasi's father, distraught at his son's having abandoned his young wife and children, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura gave in-depth answers to such objections as "He's too young. First he should fulfil his household obligations by having sons" and so forth.[13]

Following the spirit expressed by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura (in *Śaraṇāgati*)—*bhakti*

bahirmukha nija-jane jāni para: "I take nondevotee relatives as outsiders"—Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī stated, "Never desirable is the association of persons, however affectionate they may be, within whom the propensity to constantly serve Kṛṣṇa has not awakened."[14] He himself showed indifference toward non-Vaiṣṇava relatives, such as when his paternal aunt, who lived near Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's house in Godruma, occasionally came to see him.[*] Yet he fully accepted the devotional offerings of another apparent bodily relative, his nephew Śrī Bipina Bihārī Vidyābhūṣaṇa (a son of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's second daughter), who was a great friend of the Gauḍīya Mission and had erected in memory of his father, Bhakti Suhṛt Prabhu, the Bhakti Suhṛt Toraṇa, the entrance gate of Śrī Yogapīṭha.

In those days most families were extended, comprised of many children and other relatives, and their financial condition would not be seriously affected if one member became a sadhu. But Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura could make concessions if family members were in crucial need of their son's earnings. For instance, he gave special permission to the *maṭha-vāsī* Śrī Praṇavānanda Brahmacārī to conduct private tuitions in secular subjects to support his widowed mother, who had no other living son nor means of income.

Four

Profiles of Disciples: Sannyasis and Bābājīs

Sannyasis

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura initiated at least twenty sannyasis, who along with a small number of non-sannyasi leading disciples formed the cadre of the Gauḍīya Maṭha. Several Gauḍīya Maṭha sannyasis were either tall or stout, and Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura commented that simply by seeing them people would be impressed. A few were previously householders; others had joined the mission unmarried. Most were intensely strict and uncompromising, both with themselves and others. Almost all were highly educated and scholarly. But previous qualifications or lack thereof mattered little to those infused with the spirit of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who referred to his sannyasis as *jīvanta* (living) *mṛdaṅgas* and sent them out to preach:[1]

> The *tridaṇḍa-sannyāsī* is the chanter of the *kīrtana* of Kṛṣṇa. This chant is however a really living chant. It makes its appearance on his lips by the joint exertions of the divinity and the serving souls. The *tridaṇḍa-sannyāsī* is represented in the form of the *mṛdaṅga.* Struck at both ends by the hands of the player the *mṛdaṅga* is rendered capable of uttering the *kīrtana* of *Kṛṣṇa.* Such is the function of the *tridaṇḍī. Śrī-gurudeva* drums into him at one end the word of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The loyal listeners of the word of Godhead drum at the other end by their receiving response. The *tridaṇḍī,* thus operated at both ends, is enabled to give out the sweet chant of Kṛṣṇa.[2]

In Hindu tradition it had become practically forgotten that sannyasis should not only beg or live as hermits, but should move within mainstream society, preaching and uplifting the common man to spiritual existence. Hence the outgoing propagandism of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's sannyasis was a welcome novelty. Their dedication, conviction, adherence to religious principles, and their lucidity and proficiency in both traditional and modern systems of thought, soon became well-known and esteemed as they continually toured throughout India, creating tremendous interest wherever they went.

But Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura warned his sannyasis to remain cautious amid such acclaim. Having accepted a lofty pedestal, they were always in the public eye and ever subject to judgment. He would quote Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, *sannyāsīra alpa chidra sarva-loke gāya:* "A sannyasi's slight mistake is broadcast by all."[3]

Śrīmad Bhakti Pradīpa Tīrtha Mahārāja

Śrī Rajanīkānta Basu, a government employee from a village in Noakhali District, East Bengal, and his wife Śrīmatī Bidhumukhī became disciples of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura after rejecting their *jāta-gosāñi* guru. At the close of his life Śrī Rajanīkānta accepted the dress and vows of a *bābājī* from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.* Bidhumukhī spent her last days as a widow in Navadvīpa.† Śrī Jagadīśa Basu, born in 1877, was the first of their five sons, the youngest of whom later became the famed Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu.

After graduating from Calcutta University, Jagadīśa lived in Calcutta with his wife and worked as a schoolmaster. On 25 March 1910, Gaura-*jayantī,* he visited Māyāpur with his friend Śrī Vaikuṇṭhanātha Ghosal Bhakti Tattva Vācaspati—a court *paṇḍita* of the maharaja of Tripura and follower of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. There at the Yogapīṭha, Jagadīśa saw Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura for the first time, lecturing in the presence of Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī and other devotees.

Upon being introduced by Vaikuṇṭha Babu, Jagadīśa prostrated and tearfully requested the shelter of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda, who said, "You are an educated and respectable person. If you accept the responsibility of preaching on Lord Caitanya's behalf, certainly many people will be attracted to His message." Asked by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura to speak Hari-*kathā,* Jagadīśa discoursed on *brahmacarya,* particularly the incomparable current manifestation of *brahmacarya* in the personage of Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī. Inspired from within, Jagadīśa also declared that from this place of *ātma-nivedana* Mahāprabhu's prophecy that His name would spread all over the world will be fulfilled.*

That same afternoon Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī delivered Hari-*kathā* to Jagadīśa for several hours and advised him to ask permission from Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura to meet Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī at Kuliyā. Early the next morning Jagadīśa went to Kuliyā, where he offered *daṇḍavat* and a watermelon to Bābājī Mahārāja. Although normally Bābājī Mahārāja refused anything brought by outsiders, when he understood that Jagadīśa was sent by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, he graciously accepted this presentation. After speaking to Jagadīśa for some time he told him to chant a selection from *Prārthanā.* Jagadīśa sang the *kīrtana* that begins *gaurāṅga balite habe pulaka śarīra.*

Bābājī Mahārāja instructed Jagadīśa to have full faith in guru and Vaiṣṇavas, to become as humble as a blade of grass and more tolerant than a tree, to avoid the association of dishonest persons, and to ceaselessly chant the Lord's holy names. When Jagadīśa said that he had not yet been initiated, Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja posited that since Māyāpur is the place of self-surrender and there Jagadīśa had already surrendered to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda, in what other way would he obtain the shelter of a guru? "Go!" he told Jagadīśa. "The Ṭhākura is waiting for you." He then blessed Jagadīśa to take *sannyāsa* and preach the name of Mahāprabhu throughout the planet, although at that time there was no indication of either *sannyāsa* in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism or worldwide preaching. Jagadīśa then touched Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja's lotus feet—although

usually whoever dared try to do so was angrily forbidden by Bābājī Mahārāja with a promise of destruction.

Following Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja's advice, Jagadīśa returned to Māyāpur. At midday on the fifth day after Gaura-*jayantī,* having shaved his head and bathed in the Gaṅgā, he and three other devotees were given *kāma-gāyatrī* and *kāma-bīja* mantras by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura at his cottage in Godruma.[†] Later Jagadīśa relished his guru's *prasāda* remnants. That same afternoon, the Ṭhākura read from *Śikṣāṣṭaka* and illuminated it for the devotees, then asked Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī to recite from Sanātana-*śikṣā,* on which he interspersed comments.

Jagadīśa spent much of the following summer at Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja serving Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, on whose order he and Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī performed *saṅkīrtana* every morning all around Godruma, chanting the first song (beginning *nadīyā-godrume nityānanda mahājana*) of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's "Nagara-kīrtana" and preaching to local inhabitants. Every afternoon from about one o'clock to four there was recitation of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* followed by *kīrtana* of *śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda jayādvaita śrī-gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda,* during which Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura would dance and gyrate in transcendental bliss.[*] Jagadīśa noted that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura never allowed ordinary worldly topics to be discussed at Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja, immediately prohibiting anyone who started speaking such, stressing repeatedly that the dharma for Kali-yuga is *harināma.* On his occasional visits to Godruma, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī enthralled Jagadīśa by effusively speaking to him on multifarious devotional themes.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura directed Jagadīśa and other disciples to emulate Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's ideal devotional service. He often told Jagadīśa that Śrī Gaurasundara had sent Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī to this world with two tasks: to introduce *daiva-varṇāśrama-dharma* and to propagate the pure chanting of the holy names within Vaiṣṇava society by establishing a sodality of pure devotees. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura often read to Jagadīśa his own teachings on *varṇāśrama* as detailed in his *Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta,* but Jagadīśa could not fathom what it all meant until Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī later inaugurated his preaching mission and practically implemented those instructions.

One day Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura sent Jagadīśa Prabhu and Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī to Kuliyā for *darśana* of Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī. Bābājī Mahārāja was pleased to learn that Jagadīśa had been initiated by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and directed him to also regularly associate with and serve Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī, whom Bābājī Mahārāja considered and referred to as his guru. As did Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Bābājī Mahārāja praised Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī particularly for his strictness in giving up the *asat-saṅga* of pseudo-Vaiṣṇavas and others.

When Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura returned to Calcutta, Jagadīśa Prabhu accompanied him. After some days the Ṭhākura ordered Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī to perform *upanayana-saṁskāra* and give further mantras to Jagadīśa and two of Jagadīśa's former fellow students who also were disciples of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda. Accordingly, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī bestowed upon

them Brahma-*gāyatrī,* guru-mantra, guru-*gāyatrī,* Gaura-mantra, Gaurāṅga-*gāyatrī,* and *brāhmaṇas'* threads, employing the rites of *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā*.[*] On that day Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura gave Jagadīśa varied directions on *varṇāśrama-dharma* and advised him to accept the many more indications on this topic that he would receive from Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī in the future. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura repeatedly told Jagadīśa to follow Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī, who he said would eventually perform multifarious wonderful activities and guide numerous devotees.

Later Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī gave Jagadīśa Prabhu the appellation Bhakti Pradīpa in appreciation of his dedication to studying *śāstra* and serving Vaiṣṇavas.[†] And after completing the Bhakti-śāstrī examination introduced by Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī, Jagadīśa Prabhu earned the title Vidyāvinoda Bhakti-śāstrī Sampradāya-vaibhavācārya.

After his wife died in 1919 Jagadīśa Prabhu left his job, gave up all material engagements, and completely dedicated himself in devotional activities under Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's guidance. On 1 November 1920 at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, he was ordained as Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's first *sannyāsa* disciple, with the name Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Pradīpa Tīrtha Mahārāja, and on the next day sent to preach in East Bengal. In the following years Śrīmad Bhakti Pradīpa Tīrtha Mahārāja preached mostly in East Bengal, Orissa, Calcutta, and the West Bengal districts of Burdwan and Midnapore.

The *Express* wrote of Tīrtha Mahārāja's visit to Patna in April 1926:

> Swamiji has sacrificed all mundane pleasure for the propagation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's religion of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as revealed to us by Lord Gaurāṅga. In his daily discourses, quite in conformity with the *Bhāgavata* path he is showing his vast erudition in the Vedas, the *Upaniṣads,* the Vedānta, and other branches of Hindu religion and philosophy. Coupled with his great learning, his deep *bhakti* has charmed all who have had the good fortune to hear him once. His life and character truly depict what Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya wanted his followers to be. Those who are prejudiced against Vaiṣṇavism and who have not sunk deep into the sweet religion of *prema* and *bhakti,* those who have studied Vaiṣṇavism through Vaiṣṇava beggars and *vairāgīs* and corrupt practices of the so-called followers of Lord Gaurāṅga, will be profited by seeing and hearing Bhakti Pradīpa Mahārāja, who will shed a divine luster into their hearts—a luster that will dispel all their doubts and show them who is Gaurāṅga and what is the true Vaiṣṇavism. Being a staunch Vaiṣṇava himself, the Swamiji has mercilessly attacked those followers of his own sect who have led the lofty religion of Śrī Gaurāṅga into filthy degeneration, and in this direction, which is also an end of his mission, he has spared nobody.[4]

In 1933 Śrīmat Tīrtha Mahārāja was sent with Śrīmad Bon Mahārāja and Saṁvidānanda Prabhu to begin the mission in Europe. Among his other activities in the West, he wrote prolifically in English, producing many articles, a biography of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and translations of *Bhagavad-gītā* and numerous Vaiṣṇava prayers.

Śrīmad B.P. Tīrtha Mahārāja was an erudite and dedicated preacher, sedate, yet also simple and innocent like a child. He was instrumental in attracting many recruits to the Gauḍīya Maṭha, including several who were to become prominent: Sundarānanda Prabhu, Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu, Jadubara Prabhu, Giri Mahārāja, and Sāgara Mahārāja. He gave himself fully to devotees placed under his care, and although he was sometimes fiercely intolerant of substandard behavior, those whom he trained typically remembered him with deep gratitude, recognizing that his firmness and occasional anger reflected his deep concern for their spiritual wellbeing.

Although Śrīmad Bhakti Pradīpa Tīrtha Mahārāja had first been instructed and initiated by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, he always maintained the position of a disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, and was respected as the most senior among them.

Śrīmad Bhakti Viveka Bhāratī Mahārāja

A man of Vaiṣṇava background from Jessore District was neighbor to some of the first disciples of Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī but disagreed with them on various issues. Getting no recognition from them yet being drawn by their jaunty preaching, he eventually was inspired by Bhakti Ratna Ṭhākura to be initiated by Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī and was renamed Nayanābhirāma dāsa.* Before long his recently accepted beautiful wife died, shortly after which, in 1921, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura awarded him *sannyāsa.* Now named Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Viveka Bhāratī Mahārāja, he was Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's second *sannyāsa* initiate.

Śrīmad Bhāratī Mahārāja was a colorful strapping larger-than-life figure, towering over even the tall Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who occasionally chaffed him for being too fat, pinching him and bantering, "Are you taking ghee?" Śrīmad Bhāratī Mahārāja was so strict that if a *brahmacārī* expressed desire to visit his former home, he would berate him, "Yes, go serve your father and mother, but don't return here." For even minor discrepancies he would strike devotees with his fists or a stick. Yet when Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura chastised him for that, he desisted.

Notwithstanding his heavy character, Bhāratī Mahārāja was loved by nearly all Maṭha *brahmacārīs* for his great affection and caring. Many of them aspired to join his traveling party, the most exciting and fun to be on, for with his impassioned harangues and piquant wit, he created euphoria wherever he went. Articulating in simple language and a stentorian voice, he could make audiences laugh and then cry, and interspersed talking with singing in an attractive manner. By his flamboyant appeal, many in Bengal, Orissa, and parts of North India became disciples of his *gurudeva,* who sometimes commended Bhāratī Mahārāja for his preaching vim, yet also sometimes needled him for his populist approach.

Once while Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was lecturing in Banaras, many in attendance, unable to comprehend his recondite style, started to leave. He quickly finished and beckoned Śrīmad Bhāratī Mahārāja to come forward. As soon as Śrīmad Bhāratī Mahārāja began reciting invocatory prayers, the persons crowding the exit returned to their seats, compelled by the magnetism of his voice. He then explained in simpler format the points that his guru-*mahārāja* had been making.

At the reception accorded to Śrīmad Bon Mahārāja on his return from Europe with two German devotees, the Bāg-bazar Gauḍīya Maṭha was jam-packed with people so excited that it was impossible to start the meeting over the din of their chattering. After all other attempts to subdue the hubbub had failed, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī called for Bhāratī Mahārāja, who was lying sick in the ashram. When Bhāratī Mahārāja arrived, he ascended the rostrum and thundered, "What a shame! It is so shameful that we should bow our heads! These men have come from Europe yet we are creating hindrances to them. On seeing this kind of behavior what will they think of our Mahāprabhu's dharma?" The program recommenced amid stunned

silence.

Śrīmad Bhāratī Mahārāja was largely responsible for inspiring the zamindars of Baliyati to donate for and erect the Śrī Gādāi-Gaurāṅga Maṭha in their village. Another aristocrat to whom he preached was the queen of Aul, a small town and province near Cuttack. Once when she and her companions were honoring *mahā-prasāda* at Saccidānanda Maṭha, Śrīmad Bhāratī Mahārāja handed the young Jati Śekhara Prabhu a mango to offer her. But Jati Śekhara protested that when serving *mahā-prasāda* it is improper to favor some over others. Śrīmad Bhāratī Mahārāja retorted by severely rebuking Jati Śekhara. Overhearing the commotion, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura asked Śrīla Bhāratī Mahārāja, "Are you a sannyasi of the Auli-rāṇī (Queen of Aul) or the Gauḍīya Maṭha?" Even though that queen ultimately became a disciple of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, he nonetheless continued to refer to Bhāratī Mahārāja as "the Auli-rāṇī sannyasi."[*]

Toward the end of his guru-*mahārāja's* sojourn in this world, Bhāratī Mahārāja became estranged from the mission. But just days before Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura passed away, Bhāratī Mahārāja visited him. At that time Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī praised him as being a practical person and encouraged him to resume serving the mission.

Śrīmad Bhakti Svarūpa Parvata Mahārāja

A child born and raised next to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's residence in Godruma often awoke well before dawn upon hearing the Ṭhākura loudly chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra,* as if calling someone from a distance. Seeing this boy's budding interest in *śuddha-bhakti,* Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura told him to daily cross the river and walk to Māyāpur playing *karatālas* and singing songs such as *nadīyā-godrume nityānanda mahājana* and others that the Ṭhākura had composed for *nagara-saṅkīrtana.* Each day upon the lad's return, the Ṭhākura would give him *bātāsā prasāda.*[*]

Appreciating the boy's faith in *bhakti,* Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura ordered Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī to award him *harināma.* After doing so Bābājī Mahārāja supplicated Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, "Because you ordered me, I gave him *harināma,* although I am unfit. But if he is to take *dīkṣā,* it should be from Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī."

Soon after his marriage there arose in that young man a feeling of detachment from wife and home. So he approached Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī in Māyāpur and begged to be delivered from worldly existence. Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī sent him to Purī to oversee Bhakti-kuṭī—a service he performed for several years, during which his main engagement was chanting innumerable rounds of *japa.* Shortly after Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī began his full preaching career, he awarded *sannyāsa* to that disciple, giving him the name Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Svarūpa Parvata Mahārāja.

Just after accepting *sannyāsa* Śrīmat Parvata Mahārāja went preaching in north Orissa. One evening in the remote village of Udala, accessible only by foot or bullock cart, he began his first public lecture there by saying, "Who shall I speak to here? All are without *akṣara-jñāna.*" Since *akṣara* means "letter," the people assumed that he was accusing them of being analphabetic fools. Infuriated, the villagers decided to give him a good thrashing the next morning. Expecting trouble, Śrīmat Parvata Mahārāja's accompanying *brahmacārīs* warned him not to participate in the usual dawn *nagara-saṅkīrtana.* He responded, "I came to preach on the order of my guru, so preach I must. If people are dissatisfied and beat me, then I must deserve it. So be it." He then ventured out and explained to the waiting crowd that in stating *akṣara* he was referring to another meaning of the word, namely *brahma,* the imperishable spiritual truth. He elaborated that not only in Udala, but throughout the entire universe, people are bereft of the vital knowledge of spiritual reality. In this way Parvata Mahārāja caught the imagination of the local people, who then repented their previous wrath and accorded him great respect.

Some years after Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had departed, Śrīmat Parvata Mahārāja founded a Maṭha at Udala, personally bringing earth from the spot where his guru-*mahārāja* had sat at Kuamara, some fifteen miles distant, and depositing it in the foundation of the future structure.

Śrīmat Parvata Mahārāja endeavored painstakingly for the mission, preaching fearlessly in

many areas of Bengal and beyond. He would accept any living conditions and hardly bothered to eat properly. Even when sick he insisted on addressing meetings, saying, "Let not a day pass without *pracāra.*" He was so strict that he rebuked any *brahmacārī* he saw touching or fondling children, cautioning them that by so doing the desire for family life would arise within them.

Observing his austerities Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura told Śrīmad Bhakti Svarūpa Parvata Mahārāja, "I am watching over you. The day will come when I shall take you from this hard way of life and ask you to simply sit somewhere and chant, and I will give you an attendant."

Śrīmad Bhakti Vijñāna Āśrama Mahārāja

After joining the Gauḍīya Maṭha, Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Vijñāna Āśrama Mahārāja developed an intense desire to worship Śrī Nṛsiṁha-deva, for which he was given a Nṛsiṁha-mantra by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Frequenting Nṛsiṁha-pallī, he would be overcome by ecstasy in loving remembrance of Lord Nṛsiṁha.

During one Navadvīpa-dhāma Parikramā, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura ordered Āśrama Mahārāja to mount the elephant to help tend the deity of Gaurasundara. Perceiving Āśrama Mahārāja's hesitancy to sit above him and the other devotees, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura quoted, *kabhu nā bādhibe tomāya viṣaya-taraṅga:* "The waves of material sense enjoyment will not obstruct you."[5]

Śrīmad Bhakti Prakāśa Araṇya Mahārāja

As one of the earliest followers of Siddhānta Sarasvatī, Śrīnātha dāsa Adhikārī was present at Siddhānta Sarasvatī's acceptance of *sannyāsa.* He was himself awarded *sannyāsa* in 1925 and renamed Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Prakāśa Araṇya Mahārāja. Although scarcely literate, Araṇya Mahārāja was an enthusiastic preacher able to discourse effectively even among highly educated persons, simply due to his faithful hearing from and realization of his guru-*mahārāja's* explications. In Gauḍīya Maṭha circles, he was renowned for nonstop Hari-*kathā.* Always and everywhere, regardless of circumstances, he would go on speaking the message of *śāstra,* often quoting Sanskrit and English terms he had heard from Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, although he was otherwise quite unaquainted with those languages. Anyone who heard him naturally presumed that he possessed a university degree, and could not have guessed that he could hardly compose even a simple missive. His main preaching field was southern East Bengal.

Śrīmad Bhakti Hṛdaya Bon Mahārāja

Born in 1901 in an aristocratic orthodox *brāhmaṇa* family of Dacca District, from childhood Śrī Narendranātha Mukhopādhyāya cherished a special feeling for Kṛṣṇa. After receiving primary education he was sent for further study to far-off Ranchi, where he soon became fluent in Hindi and English.* Upon reading booklets describing the lives of the Vaiṣṇava boy-saints Dhruva and Prahlāda, Naren resolved to flee to Purī to search out Kṛṣṇa. But while changing trains, he was apprehended by a police inspector who had been alerted by Naren's family. Naren then returned to school and went on to earn a B.A. degree in English from Patna University. Yet he remained dissatisfied in worldly pursuits and was earnestly praying to Bhagavān to help him find a genuine guru.

Following a well-wisher's recommendation, one day in 1924 Naren visited Mādhva Gauḍīya Maṭha, in Dacca. Seeing a photo of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī therein, he immediately recognized him as his eternal guru, and upon inquiry learned from the *maṭha-vāsīs* that this divine personality resided in Calcutta. At that time Naren's father was deathly sick, and a doctor had advised that the only hope to save his life was a medicine available exclusively in Calcutta. Accordingly Naren was sent to Calcutta—yet he never returned with the medicine. He instead went to Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, and on being informed that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would soon return from Māyāpur, requested to stay.

On the morning when Naren arrived at the Maṭha, he was still fasting from the previous day, its having been Ekādaśī, and since no one offered him food he continued to fast. After two days without eating, he was sat down to honor *prasāda* on a floor unwashed after the initiated devotees had finished partaking. In these first few days at the Maṭha, Naren encountered many such practices that were unthinkable in the pure brahminical culture he was raised in, but he overlooked them while eagerly waiting to meet his *gurudeva.*

When Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura arrived, he called this new prospect to his room and impressed upon him the knowledge that Naren already instinctively sensed—that worldly existence and bodily relationships are all transitory, and the real purpose of life is to seek out Kṛṣṇa. After speaking to him alone for an hour, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura asked him to write a summary of all that he had heard. Naren soon returned with an essay titled "Ātmīya Ke?" (Who is a kinsman?), upon reading which Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura called Sundarānanda Prabhu and told him to publish it in the next issue of the *Gauḍīya.* Sundarānanda Prabhu protested that the article was composed in modern Bengali, quite different from the inhouse style, and that anyway the upcoming edition had already been laid out. Yet Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura overrode his objections and told him to withdraw any other article to accommodate this one.

Soon preaching parties headed by the sannyasis returned to the Maṭha, and in the presence of all Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura gave Narendranātha an extraordinary order: "Come every morning and sit in my room. Take *prasāda* at midday and return in the afternoon. Apart from the time needed for eating, resting, and other such basic requirements, spend all day with me hearing

Hari-*kathā*. You have no other service or engagement."

Next morning Naren asked Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, "Prabhupāda, everyone who lives here wears *tulasī* neckbeads. May I also?" Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī called Sajjana Mahārāja and had him arrange neckbeads for Naren. The following day Naren asked Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, "Prabhupāda, everyone who lives here wears red cloth. May I also?" Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī agreed, although red cloth was awarded only to tried and tested *brahmacārīs*. Naren also had his head shaved, keeping a *śikhā,* and applied *tilaka* markings on his forehead and body. That very afternoon his second brother came looking for him. Taking his guru's permission, Naren went to meet his brother, who simply by seeing him confirmed his fear that Naren had devalued their lineage by entering "the despicable Vaiṣṇava cult," and without giving him a chance to say anything, left with tears in his eyes and rancor in his heart. The very next day, less than a month since first coming to the Maṭha, Narendranātha was initiated as Śrī Nanda-sūnu Brahmacārī.

Soon thereafter, Nanda-sūnu Prabhu was sent with a traveling party for his first outing, and demonstrated such mettle and enterprise that for the next trip he was appointed the *pracāraka* (lead preacher) in a new group. Within a few months of whirlwind touring, he preached from one side of Bengal to the other, aquiring a reputation for lectures in both Bengali and English that were both philosophically profound and captivatingly delivered with masterly command of language. In September 1925, slightly over a year since joining the Maṭha, Nanda-sūnu Prabhu was awarded *sannyāsa,* with the title Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Hṛdaya Bon Mahārāja, and soon proved himself competent in a variety of important services.[*]

Before long Śrīmad Bon Mahārāja took the Bhakti-śāstrī examination, and although several reputed and experienced devotees were among those sitting for the test, he achieved top distinction. One of his specialties was inviting prominent people to meet Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, one of whom was Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, soon to gain worldwide fame as a philosopher and later to become president of India, who visited during his first tenure as professor of philosophy at Calcutta University (1921–31).

A typical appreciation of Śrīmad Bon Mahārāja appeared in a Bombay newspaper:

> His Holiness Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Bhakti Hṛdaya Bon Mahārāja of Gauḍīya Maṭha, Calcutta, delivered a highly cultured lecture on "The Eternal and Universal Religion of all Souls" in lucid English before a big and educated audience at the Śrauta Smārta Dharma Pratiṣṭhāpaka Vidvad Pariṣad at Mādhavabag. The depth of knowledge and way of exposition of His Holiness were so appealing and enrapturing, the thundering yet sweet voice was so very attractive, that the audience was kept spellbound, so to say, inasmuch as the whole spacious compound of the Pariṣad was filled in a minute and not an inch was left vacant.
>
> It is said that the right light comes from the East; and we should say this of our Swamiji who comes from the eastern corner of India to the western extremity. The learned circles

—why only the learned circles? the whole of Bombay, and not only Bombay, but India and the entire world—should boast of such a spiritual giant, a luminary of the spiritual firmament who will surely enrich and accelerate the spiritual atmosphere of the present day. The Bombay public heartily welcomes His Holiness.[6]

Being fluent in English, lucid in presenting philosophy, and an appealing and fruitful preacher to the educated classes, Śrīmad Bon Mahārāja was an obvious choice to head the Gauḍīya Maṭha's thrust into South India. Indeed he was instrumental in quickly gaining a foothold there and acquiring land for the Madras Gauḍīya Maṭha, of which he was appointed *maṭha-rakṣaka.* Bon Mahārāja led the team that discovered the place of Lord Caitanya's discussions with Śrī Rāmananda Rāya on the bank of the Godāvarī, played a key role in the major Theistic Exhibitions held in Māyāpur and Calcutta by organizing and designing the displays, headed the advance party for the Vraja-maṇḍala Parikramā, was the first editor of the Hindi *Bhāgavata* magazine, and also was an excellent cook.

In 1933 his dynamism and versatility earned Swami Bon (as he was often called) the opportunity to pioneer activities in the West. While overseas, he published diaries entitled *My First Year in England* and *My Second Year in England,* recording the dates on which he gave lectures, the names of eminent men he had met, and photos of scenes such as himself playing a harmonium and Śrīmat Tīrtha Mahārāja trying to feed some pigeons. Yet in neither book was there even a single mention of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who expressed anger at the use of *My* in the diaries' titles, the author having made himself the subject of the books.[7] And despite gallant attempts in Europe, after two and a half years Swami Bon's conclusion was: “Westerners ask questions that cannot be answered.”

Shortly before the passing of his guru-*mahārāja,* Bon Mahārāja sent him a letter presaging various problems that the institution would face in the future (many of which manifested immediately after Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's disappearance). Yet upon receiving it, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī became so angry that he banned Śrīmad Bon Mahārāja from ever again entering his presence, with orders that he be excluded even from his *tirobhāva* ceremony. And by correspondence he advised the Maharaja of Tripura—a prominent supporter of the Gauḍīya Maṭha and admirer of Bon Mahārāja—whose patronage for Bon Mahārāja's projects had been publicly announced, to not give any money to Bon Mahārāja.[*]

Śrīmad Bhakti Sarvasva Giri Mahārāja

One Indu Babu of Dacca became so convinced by Śrīmad Bhakti Pradīpa Tīrtha Mahārāja's lectures there that he surrendered at Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's lotus feet and in 1923 was initiated as Sarveśvarānanda Brahmacārī. Seeing Sarveśvarānanda Prabhu's insatiable zest to broadcast Caitanya Mahāprabhu's message, in 1925 Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī awarded him *sannyāsa* together with Śrīmad Bon Mahārāja, bestowing the name Śrīmad Bhakti Sarvasva Giri Mahārāja.

A lifelong *brahmacārī,* Giri Mahārāja was an accomplished speaker in Bengali, Hindi, and English. In contrast to his spindly frame, his voice was strong and arresting. Preaching mostly in western India and also in Burma, moving in all strata of society from common uneducated people to leaders, he inspired faith in *śuddha-bhakti* by his saintly qualities of friendliness, gentleness, humility, honesty, and simplicity.

Śrīmad Bhakti Vaibhava Sāgara Mahārāja

When Śrīmad Bhakti Pradīpa Tīrtha Mahārāja was preaching in Jessore District in 1925, one young man became so attracted that he immediately left for Calcutta to surrender at Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's lotus feet, and soon thereafter was initiated as Satyānanda dāsa. Recognizing his genuine taste for *bhajana* and his sincere guru-*bhakti,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī awarded him *sannyāsa* just two years later, with the name Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Vaibhava Sāgara Mahārāja.

Śrīmad Sāgara Mahārāja held several important positions in the mission. For seven years he was in charge of the Purī Maṭha, where Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura often remained for extended periods, and at one point he was simultaneously responsible for the Maṭhas in Delhi, Vṛndāvana, and Kurukṣetra. Being rather shy, he was so unsuited for fundraising that he often returned penniless to the Maṭha, having ridden ticketless on the train by telling the conductors to procure the fare from the Maṭha.

Sāgara Mahārāja spoke Hari-*kathā* solely for the pleasure of Hari, in a soporific monotone, without any gestures or verbal effects, and without interacting with the listeners or caring whether they were listening, sleeping, or leaving. Sometimes he would continue well after all had departed, and when thus informed by his attendant *brahmacārīs,* would admonish them, "Hari-*kathā* must continue. At least the trees and shrubs will hear."

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī once told Śrīmad Bhakti Vaibhava Sāgara Mahārāja, "You are an *ājanma-bhakta* (born devotee)," and a few times told other disciples that Sāgara Mahārāja was a *jīvan-mukta mahā-puruṣa,* (a great personage who although living in this world is fully liberated from its influence).

Śrīmad Bhakti Śrīrūpa Purī Mahārāja

As the younger son of Śrī Bhakti Vilāsa Ṭhākura, Śrī Hīrālāla Ghoṣa had been inducted into *śuddha-bhakti* from the beginning of life.* Like his father, he was rigidly austere and immersed in the writ of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Even from his childhood it was clear to all that Hīrālāla possessed saintly qualities. After Śrī Bhakti Vilāsa Ṭhākura left home to reside at Śrīvāsa Aṅgana, he sent Hīrālāla devotional books and instructive letters urging him to fully accept the path of *śuddha-bhakti.* Accordingly, Hīrālāla took initiation from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, being given the name Hṛdaya Caitanya dāsa Adhikārī. His family guru soon arrived at Hṛdaya Caitanya Prabhu's cottage and cursed him. But Hṛdaya Caitanya cared naught, considering such a spiritually insipid person as impotent, and was confident of protection from his genuine guru. On that very day, a son of his family guru contracted cholera and soon died.

Hṛdaya Caitanya Prabhu made his home like a *maṭha,* with a daily program of spiritual functions and preaching activities. By his influence many persons in that area took to *śuddha-bhakti* and became disciples of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

In 1923, thirty-three years after Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had placed their lotus feet in Hṛdaya Caitanya Prabhu's home village of Āmalājoḍā, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī also visited, in reciprocation with the devotional spirit of Hṛdaya Caitanya Prabhu and his compatriot godsiblings. The delighted inhabitants, including some disciples of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, gave Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī a welcome befitting an *ācārya.* He spent two days there, in Hṛdaya Caitanya's home, during which he calculated this disciple's horoscope and revealed that he would be a sincere devotee of Kṛṣṇa. As a village doctor content with whatever remuneration his patients offered, Hṛdaya Caitanya had scanty means, so to receive his guru-*mahārāja's* party he took a considerable loan and fed them opulently. After meals he jubilantly honored a morsel of remnants from each senior godbrother's plate.

During this visit of Gauḍīya Maṭha devotees Āmalājoḍā was again suffused with the spirit of *śuddha-bhakti,* and hence it was proposed that a Maṭha be established at Hṛdaya Caitanya Prabhu's residence.† Hṛdaya Caitanya Prabhu took permission from his guru-*mahārāja* to make a temple on a parcel of land in front of his house, wherein he planned to install deities of Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga–Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī, with the idea to gradually train his four-year-old son Gauradāsa and eventually entrust the service to him. A few days after obtaining consent from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, he arranged for a deity of Mahāprabhu to be fashioned from neem. Yet within a month of the deity's arriving, one evening Bhakti Viveka Bhāratī Mahārāja arrived without notice and forcibly took the deity to Calcutta.

Just prior to this Hṛdaya Caitanya Prabhu had written to his guru-*mahārāja,* admitting strong attachment to his son and proposing to take his family to live at Śrīvāsa Aṅgana. Shortly thereafter he received the reply “It is impossible to properly serve Hari while attached to a

mortal son. Who is who's son? There are innumerable Gauradāsas everywhere on earth. Attempting to live in the *dhāma* while simultaneously cultivating affection for your son and other relatives will simply disturb others and obstruct your own *bhajana.*"[8] These emphatic words of the *ācārya* threw Hṛdaya Caitanya Prabhu's mind into turmoil, which precipitated his cutting family ties forever and joining the mission full time. It was 1924, and he was about thirty-one years old.

He was fully determined to give up all attachment to, contact with, identification with, and even thought of his previous family and village home. But on the entreaties of devotees in Āmalājoḍā and the order of his *gurudeva,* three years later he reestablished the Prapannāśrama at the very site on which it had previously been founded by Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Hṛdaya Caitanya Prabhu added a temple for the worship of Mahāprabhu—the same deity taken by Śrīmad Bhāratī Mahārāja and again returned by him—and also Śrī Śrī Rādhā–Vinoda-Kiśora.

In September 1928 Hṛdaya Caitanya Prabhu was invested into *sannyāsa* and named Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Śrīrūpa Purī Mahārāja. His resolve to forswear all contact with his former family endured to the extent that when he was petitioned to sign documents and fulfil other requisites for his daughter's marriage, he flatly refused. Eventually Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī ceded to the pleas of Śrīrūpa Purī's cousin-brother and told this most stalwart sannyasi that there would be no transgression in complying with the arrangement, for he himself had approved it. And when relatives of Śrīrūpa Purī rushed to Māyāpur upon getting news of his imminent demise, he refused to see them. Only after much pressing from other devotees did he receive his family for a few moments, yet he hardly spoke to them and did not even glance at his former wife.

Renowned for his strictness and frankness, throughout his wide travels and preaching Śrīrūpa Purī never cared to entertain the public with flowery words meant to elicit donations or praise. He lived by the principle that rigid adherence to the tenets of *śuddha-bhakti* must precede its propagation, and had firm faith that all auspiciousness would come by simply adhering to and repeating the words heard from his guru. Irrespective of time, place, or circumstance, he would immediately and strongly rebut any statement contrary to *śāstra* or *siddhānta.* Even when in 1934 he was called to speak in the court of the maharaja of Badagara (Orissa), he stuck to his principle and did not mince words. This attitude was noted and appreciated by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Yet Śrīrūpa Purī's general behavior was so simple and guileless that all who came in contact with him, whether sinful or pious, became charmed. Not caring for food, shelter, or material possessions, and sleeping little, he constantly performed *kīrtana.* He maintained a vow to not eat or take even a drop of water before chanting one lakh of names, disregarding the advice of godbrothers that according to the principle of *yukta-vairāgya* such rigorism was unnecessary. Even when his body was broken by age and racked by multiple diseases, he uncomplainingly accepted his condition as Kṛṣṇa's mercy and strove to increase rather than curtail his devotional

practices.

Śrīmad Śrīrūpa Purī also wrote for the *Gauḍīya,* including a series of touching articles with titles such as "Āmāra Deśa-bhramaṇa Kāma" (My wanderlust) and "Āmāra Durdaiva" (My misfortune), in which he examined various *anarthas* by discussing his own position, declaring himself possessed of each. For some time he was *maṭha-rakṣaka* at Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Maṭha, the Gauḍīya Maṭha branch in Śrī Vṛndāvana.

After many years of intense Hari-*sevā,* diseased and aware of his imminent disappearance from this plane, on his guru-*mahārāja's* order Śrīrūpa Purī took refuge of Śrīvāsa Aṅgana, the place of his father's *bhajana* and final abode. He lay on his bed fasting and listening as devotees recited the entire *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata.* He remained in clear consciousness, absorbed in hearing until the entire book was read and devotees had begun to recite *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*— at which point he departed this world. It was 1 November 1936, just two months before his own *gurudeva* passed away. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura confirmed what all who knew Śrīmad Śrīrūpa Purī intuitively understood: he was a *jīvan-mukta.*

Śrīmad Bhakti Śrīrūpa Purī Mahārāja's *samādhi* at Śrīvāsa Aṅgana adjoins that of his father.

Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja

Rāmendra-candra Bhaṭṭācārya, of distinguished *smārta-brāhmaṇa* lineage, was steeped in *smārta* ideology and practice, including a deep distaste for the "riffraff Vaiṣṇavas." Yet from childhood he felt attracted to saintly life, dedication, and sacrifice, and toward Caitanya Mahāprabhu. As these feelings grew he started mixing with Vaiṣṇavas, much to the alarm of his relatives. His appreciation for Lord Caitanya increased as he came to know further about Him, but observing the hollowness of His purported followers, he became even more averse to them than previously.

Disappointment over Rāmendra's unorthodox proclivities accelerated his father's death. Having already obtained a university degree, and the brunt of family responsibilities now upon him, Rāmendra enrolled in law college. Yet he soon quit, feeling morally obliged to join Gandhi's non-cooperation movement. He also visited various sadhus, seeking to find a guru and take initiation, but found none that satisfied his soul's need. Eventually he took a job in Calcutta, where one day in 1923 he saw a placard advertising a month-long festival at the Gauḍīya Maṭha on Ultadingi Road. Surmising that it must be connected with Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, he resolved to attend.

When Rāmendra first arrived at the Maṭha, he found only one devotee manning the outside hall, the rest being out for *nagara-saṅkīrtana.* Entering into discussion, Rāmendra discovered that the devotee's knowledge of scripture and of Caitanya Mahāprabhu was far greater than his own, which he had deemed extensive. When Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura returned with the *saṅkīrtana* party, Rāmendra saw him for the first time, handing his *tridaṇḍa* to an accompanying disciple. Although Rāmendra knew nothing about Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, at first sight he perceived in him complete indifference to the ordinary world and others' opinions —that he was fully self-sufficient and independent.

Thereafter Rāmendra began to regularly attend the Gauḍīya Maṭha despite his relatives' objections to "those nasty Vaiṣṇavas." On one of his first visits he observed Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and a few devotees listening to a *paṇḍita* explaining an *Upaniṣad.* He was astonished that such exalted topics, formerly the preserve of reclusive forest sages, were being discussed in this hectic, noisy, wholly materialistic city. But he was disturbed that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was residing above the deity of Lord Caitanya installed in a roadside room on the ground floor. When he asked a devotee, "Is this Mahāprabhu made of earth, or wood, or what?" he got a scolding in reply: "Mahāprabhu Himself is here. He is not wood or metal or any material product." "Alright," Rāmendra continued, "so then why is your *gurudeva,* who you consider the greatest devotee, in a better room and above the deity?" The devotee answered that Mahāprabhu is also in the heart of the guru, who is thus never separated from Mahāprabhu and incessantly serves Him. Although Rāmendra could not entirely follow this argument, he accepted that there must be some value to it.

Rāmendra highly appreciated the discourses given by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his disciples,

which he would hear with unwavering attention. One day Kīrtanānanda Brahmacārī warned Praṇavānanda Brahmacārī, whose discourse Rāmendra had just attended, “He earnestly listens to every word yet doesn't ask anything. None of us know him. He's probably spying for the British.” But a little investigation revealed that far from being a spy, he had previously been a member of Gandhi's movement.

The Hari-*kathā* of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his disciples strongly attracted Rāmendra. Its solidly *śāstrīya* rather than speculative basis, augmented by logical cogency and compelling sweetness, inevitably convinced Rāmendra of the unassailable superiority of Gauḍīya *siddhānta* as presented by them; hence he felt an increasing desire to live with these gentlemanly and educated sadhus. When his wife passed away he could understand that his material encumbrances were being abscised. Desiring to learn as much as possible about the Gauḍīya Maṭha and its mission, he reasoned that he ought to know its leader; so he would sit outside Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's room and listen.

But one day Śrī Kīrtanānanda Brahmacārī stopped Rāmendra as he was about to go upstairs: “Where are you going?” Rāmendra said, “I'm going to Guru-mahārāja. I like to hear and associate.” “No, never,” snapped Śrī Kīrtanānanda. “You must stay here in the waiting room. Only upon obtaining permission may you enter inside; otherwise you must stay here. Never cross this threshold.” Taken aback, Rāmendra thought, “Is this the considerate nature of sadhus? Why should there be any difference outwardly and inwardly? I need not come here again.” But then a narration from *Mahābhārata* came to his mind, concerning Śrīla Vyāsadeva's sending Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī to Janaka Mahārāja to finish his education. When Śrīla Śukadeva arrived at Janaka Mahārāja's capitol, he was detained for seven days at the outer gate before news of this was conveyed to Janaka, who then sanctioned that he pass the gate. Yet there was another gate, and Śukadeva was again detained. In this way he was detained for seven days at each of seven gates. So only after waiting forty-nine days could he meet Janaka Mahārāja. Rāmendra further cogitated, “Even if they seat me on a throne and worship me, if their spirit is intrinsically flawed I should not return, but if there is genuine good here, then even if they beat me with broomsticks I must not leave.” Rāmendra kept visiting.

Then one day while Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was strolling on the roof after having taken his midday meal, Rāmendra approached and stood discreetly in a corner. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī asked a devotee in attendance, “Has he something to say?” So that devotee asked Rāmendra, “Do you have something to say?” “No, I have nothing to say.” The messenger reported, “He has nothing to say.” Then Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī asked, “Does he have something to inquire?” The devotee returned and told Rāmendra, “Guru-mahārāja asked if you have something to inquire.” “No, I have nothing to inquire.” When this was conveyed to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, he suggested, “He has some purpose in mind.” The devotee returned to inquire if it was so. Rāmendra responded, “Yes, without purpose nothing is done. When I come, I have a purpose.” “What purpose?” asked the devotee. “To gain the grace of all of you.” When this was relayed to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, he approached Rāmendra and asked who he was, what he did, where his home was, and so on. Upon receiving replies to

these queries Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī told Rāmendra that he was fortunate to have been born in Gauḍa-*maṇḍala.* The attending devotee then offered a booklet from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī to Rāmendra, who replied that he already had it. "That doesn't matter," the devotee explained. "With good will Guru-mahārāja is giving this to you, so please take it." So Rāmendra accepted the book and touched it to his head. That was his first talk with Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.

On another day Rāmendra was present when Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, together with a small group of disciples proficient in English, was mulling over the proper English adjective to entitle the upcoming exhibition. Some suggested *religious* and others *spiritual,* yet Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was not satisfied until Rāmendra, still then an outsider, proffered *theistic.*

Despite his growing leanings toward the Gauḍīya Maṭha, Rāmendra maintained reservations. Considering Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura a *kāyastha,* or *śūdra,* he wanted to accept a guru from a lineage as respected as his own.

Ignoring his ailing mother's call to visit her before she left for pilgrimage to Haridwar, Rāmendra went to Māyāpur for the Gaura-*jayantī* celebrations at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha. He was fascinated by the transcendentally blissful and busy atmosphere, but it was the message of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to departing visitors—"Please don't deceive me"—that revolutionized his outlook. Seeing that everyone was stupefied by his claim that they had deceived him, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura explained:

> All of you came with the intention to serve Kṛṣṇa, and on that basis I became attached to you. Yet now I see that you attended this ceremony only as a fashion and are returning home to domestic affairs, though you assured me that you would serve Kṛṣṇa. Thus I have been deceived. If you say, 'No Prabhupāda, we did not deceive you. We just have a few days' work to complete, just a few responsibilities to tend to, after which we will return and do whatever you instruct,' then I say there is no need for it. If someone says, 'My house is on fire, so first let me put it out; then I will come,' still I maintain that there is no need for that. If fire burns the whole world, do not waste time trying to put it out. All necessities can be met only by Kṛṣṇa-*sevā.* You have no obligation other than to serve Kṛṣṇa. The object of your and everyone's self-interest is Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The living being has no duty other than to serve Him. All your fulfilment reposes in Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.

Hearing this Rāmendra was wonderstruck. He contemplated that no one of this world could express such intense necessity for serving Kṛṣṇa, and that he must immediately surrender and become a disciple of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Rāmendra's mother had passed away in Haridwar. After performing the required obsequies, he informed devotees of the Calcutta Maṭha that he would join them full-time after seeing his two younger brothers through their studies and into fixed vocations. But Śrīmad Bhāratī Mahārāja and others pressed him, "No, no! You have a great opportunity. First Kṛṣṇa took your wife,

and now also your mother. He has done enough for you. Truly, if you don't avail of this chance, another obstacle may arise and spoil your life with no further hope. Do not delay. Come immediately." Rāmendra acquiesced. It was 1927 and he was thirty-one. Soon thereafter he was initiated as Śrī Rāmendra Sundara Vraja-vāsī.

For a short time Śrī Rāmendra Sundara Prabhu was engaged in the press at the Calcutta Maṭha, yet having more inclination for propagation and *kīrtana* he was soon sent with a preaching party. When Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura established the Vyāsa Gauḍīy Maṭha at Kurukṣetra in 1928, Rāmendra Sundara had been with the mission not even six months, yet he was left in charge and almost alone at that quiet place, which was largely unfrequented except during a solar eclipse, when there would be an overwhelming rush of lakhs of pilgrims. After about two years in Kurukṣetra, Rāmendra Sundara was given responsibility for the newly founded Maṭha in Delhi. Then he was sent to join the party headed by Śrīmad Bon Mahārāja in search of the site on the bank of the Godāvarī where Lord Caitanya's famous conversation with Rāmānanda Rāya had transpired. At that time Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura renamed him Śrī Rāmānanda dāsa, in recognition of his affinity for the teachings of Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya.

Impressed at Rāmānanda Prabhu's pointing out to him a serious ontological mistake published in the *Gauḍīya,* Śrīmad Bon Mahārāja recommended him, still a relative newcomer yet clearly exceptionally qualified, for *sannyāsa.* Accordingly, on 4 October 1930 Rāmānanda Prabhu received *sannyāsa* initiation, being named Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja.

After accompanying Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's party on a tour of South India, Śrīmat Śrīdhara Mahārāja was based in Madras for about three years, and later in Bombay. Toward the end of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's manifest pastimes, Śrīdhara Mahārāja again joined his traveling party, which remained mostly in Bengal. During that time a major service of Śrīdhara Mahārāja's was to receive and discuss with many learned persons who came to meet Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Śrīmat Śrīdhara Mahārāja not only listened minutely to his guru-*mahārāja's* lectures, but would remember them in detail and assimilate their essence. Those speeches being abstruse, often afterward Śrīdhara Mahārāja would in simpler language unravel their import to other listeners.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura expressed appreciation for Śrīmat Śrīdhara Mahārāja's devotion and *bhajana*, and in recognition of his scholarship, writings, and philosophical acuity, conferred upon him the epithet Śāstra-nipuṇa (expert in scripture). He became especially pleased upon perusing Śrīdhara Mahārāja's composition "Śrī Bhaktivinoda-viraha-daśakam," considering it of "very happy style" and "written by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura himself." He further commented that after reading it he felt assured that whatever instructions he had spoken would remain after his passing. And when he saw an essay that Śrīdhara Mahārāja had sent for inclusion in the *Nadia Prakash*, he told the editor that printing such articles would improve the standard of the magazine.

When Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī proposed him as a possible candidate for preaching in

Europe, Śrīdhara Mahārāja submitted, “I am not fit. I cannot grasp English intonation and am unacquainted with their social habits. You would send me at great expense yet I would not be able to produce the desired result. Of course if you order I must go, but this is my humble submission.” Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī did not further pursue the matter and sent Bhakti Sāraṅga Prabhu instead. Many godbrothers were astonished that Śrīdhara Mahārāja had so lightly declined an opportunity that undoubtedly would have brought him widespread repute.

Once Śrīdhara Mahārāja's horoscope, lying open in his notebook, was noticed by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, who after examining it commented that although the chart was highly promising, the presence of the malefic Rāhu in the house of fortune would paralyze Śrīdhara Mahārāja's prospects; despite his substantial erudition, Śrīdhara Mahārāja would not flourish as a commanding personality.

For some time Śrīdhara Mahārāja preached widely, but his inclination was to be more contemplative than kinetic. Observing that, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura remarked that Śrīdhara Mahārāja was an “ease lover”—which mortified Śrīdhara Mahārāja.

The day before his passing, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī requested Śrīmat Śrīdhara Mahārāja to sing “Śrī-rūpa-mañjarī-pada.” Certain godbrothers present felt that thereby Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī bestowed upon Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja entrance into the esoteric plane of *rāga-bhakti.*

Śrīmad Bhakti Bhūdeva Śrauti Mahārāja

Like Śrīmad B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja, with whom he took *sannyāsa* on the same day, Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Bhūdeva Śrauti Mahārāja was from a traditional non-Vaiṣṇava *brāhmaṇa* family. And also like Śrīmat Śrīdhara Mahārāja, upon hearing from the Gauḍīya Maṭha devotees he became convinced of the utter worthlessness of nondevotional doctrines and rejected them forever to join Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *saṅkīrtana* movement. The *Harmonist* reported:

> Śrī Rāma Gopāla Chattopādhyāya was an inhabitant of the district of Bankura. He formerly held an appointment at Jamshedpur. While he was so employed his attention was attracted to the publications of the Gauḍīya Maṭha and he began seriously to study those works, especially the weekly journal the *Gauḍīya.* Three years ago he formally renounced his connections with the world and applied himself to the whole-time service of His Divine Grace. He was then placed in charge of seeing the Gauḍīya edition of *Bhāgavatam* through the press, and other publication work. As a resident of the Gauḍīya Maṭha in this capacity he was known as Śrī Rāma Govinda dāsa Adhikārī. He was subsequently awarded the title of Vedānta Bhūdeva by Śrī Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā, in recognition of his whole-hearted service of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Vedānta Bhūdeva Prabhu, occupied with the close scrutiny of the eleventh *skandha* (canto) of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* now in course of publication, made up his mind to accept the condition of *tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa,* which is laid down in the eleventh *skandha* of the *Bhāgavatam* as the method of obtaining the mercy of Kṛṣṇa in the shape of the condition of the *paramahaṁsa.* Acting on this decision Vedānta Bhūdeva accepted from His Divine Grace the triple-staff on the fourth of October, the day preceding that of entry into the new buildings of the Gauḍīya Maṭha. He is now known in the community of the pure servants of Kṛṣṇa by the designation of Śrīmad Bhakti Bhūdeva Śrauti Mahārāja. His conduct should serve as a living commentary on the mischief that has resulted from adoption of the life of worldliness by the study of *Bhāgavatam* from self-conceited worldlings.[9]

Śrīmad Śrauti Mahārāja was a highly renounced and humble sannyasi with no interest in personal comfort or honor, even though others endeavored to give them to him. He was a Sanskrit *paṇḍita* expert in performing deity installations, and in lectures and informal Hari-*kathā* he often quoted *śruti.* In Banaras, a stronghold of Māyāvādī and *smārta paṇḍitas,* his erudite *śāstrīya* presentations won respect for the Gauḍīya Maṭha. For some time Śrīmad Bhakti Bhūdeva Śrauti Mahārāja was editor of the Hindi *Bhāgavata* magazine, and during another period he served as famulus to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, taking dictation and writing letters on his behalf.

Śrīmad Bhakti Vilāsa Gabhastinemi Mahārāja

A Māyāvādī who was subjugated by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's sizzling refutations realized that he had to surrender, and although a householder, soon moved into the Maṭha. In 1930 he was awarded *sannyāsa,* with the name Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Vilāsa Gabhastinemi Mahārāja.

Nemi Mahārāja (as he was usually called) relished smashing the misconceptions of philosophical opponents. He preached widely and was known for his hallmark turban and his sometimes unconventional collection techniques. Among other accomplishments, he was instrumental in securing the rented property that served as the first Gauḍīya Maṭha branch in Gayā.

Once, upon arriving from his posting in Bombay to visit Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī in Purī, Śrīmad Bhakti Vilāsa Gabhastinemi Mahārāja offered *daṇḍavat* but was told that he had done so improperly: "As a sannyasi, whenever you see your guru you should touch your *daṇḍa* three times to the floor. This indicates body, mind, and words, the three items to be surrendered, as signified by the *tridaṇḍa*. The ground the *daṇḍa* touches symbolizes the heart."

Śrīmad Bhakti Sudhīra Jācak Mahārāja

While preaching in the far northwest of India on Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's order, Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Sudhīra Jācak Mahārāja was suddenly called back to Calcutta, whence he was to leave immediately for Burma. Upon arrival in Calcutta, he and his party found that their tickets were already booked and little time remained before the steamer was to depart. But at the last moment Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had the tickets cancelled and told Śrīpāda Jācak Mahārāja to instead take the next boat. After some days, newspapers reported that the ship on which the party was originally scheduled to voyage had sunk in mid-ocean.[*]

The *sannyāsa* name *Jācak* was given specifically to this sannyasi because, unlike any of his godbrothers, he had asked Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to award him *sannyāsa,* which he received in 1934.[†]

Śrīmad Bhakti Gaurava Vaikhānasa Mahārāja

A *paṇḍita* from a family of *brāhmaṇa rāja-gurus* was perfected in several *sādhanas,* including left-wing tantrism and especially sun worship. He was well known for mystical feats, including having delivered a village from the torture of a *brahma-rākṣasa.* Hearing from a devotee about the Navadvīpa-dhāma Parikramā, he became inspired to join it, and to cross over to Godruma with the party, he coincidentally boarded the same boat as Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. Still indulging in his habit of constantly chewing betel, this *paṇḍita* spat some masticated remains into the water of the river Jalāṅgī, upon seeing which, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī politely yet unequivocally pointed out, "We worship this river as Sarasvatī." That *brāhmaṇa* felt these words like a spear in his heart, and in acute repentance considered, "What is the use of all my *sādhana* if I fail to recognize and properly respect my worshipable goddess?" These thoughts led him to deliberate deeply on the purpose and direction of his life, and before long, overriding his family tradition of accepting only an elder within their lineage as guru, he surrendered at Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's lotus feet. He was about sixty years old, and within days, on 2 March 1934 (the day after Gaura-*pūrṇimā*), at the *samādhi* of Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī, without any further training or testing, he was awarded *sannyāsa.* Śrīmad Bhakti Sambal Bhāgavata Mahārāja and Śrīmad Bhakti Sambandha Turyāśramī Mahārāja were awarded *sannyāsa* in the same ceremony.

Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Śrīmad Vaikhānasa Mahārāja soon became highly respected in the Gauḍīya Maṭha for his knowledge of Sanskrit and *śāstra* and his expertise in deity worship and Vaiṣṇava rites. He lectured either in Oriya or Sanskrit, although he also knew Bengali. He was Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's only Oriya sannyasi disciple.

Śrīmad Bhakti Sambal Bhāgavata Mahārāja

Śrī Yogendra-candra Mukhopādhyāya was born in Darjeeling while his father was working there as the superintendent of the Maharaj of Burdwan's estate. Shortly thereafter, due to illness his father returned to his homestead, in the village of Singur, Hugli District, West Bengal, but soon left and accepted *sannyāsa* in Vārāṇasī. From infancy Yogendra, the only child of his parents, was raised in his maternal uncle's home in the village of Jamalpur, Burdwan District. Efforts headed by his maternal grandfather to bring the father back home proved futile. In his youth, Yogendra met and spoke to his father for the first time.

After attaining a degree in medicine in Calcutta, Yogendra first taught in Dacca, at Mitford Government Medical College, and later received various government postings as a doctor in the Bihar districts Santhal Parganas, Bhagalpur, and Singhbhum. In *gṛhastha* life he was respected for being religious and of good character. Although a *śākta* and initiated by a famous tantric, he never partook of wine or meat. During his last posting, at Jugsalai, near Jamshedpur, upon hearing Hari-*kathā* from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's disciple Śrī Dāmodara Svarūpa dāsa Adhikārī Kavi-bhūṣaṇa, Yogendra became attracted to the Gauḍīya Maṭha and soon took shelter at the lotus feet of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.

In 1931 Yogendra quit his job and went to live in Śrī Māyāpur, where he accepted Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's personal instruction to him—to serve Vaiṣṇavas—with heart and soul. Although of high birth, well educated, and elderly, he became dear to the Vaiṣṇavas for his humility and simplicity. He offered his full government pension to Śrī Caitanya Maṭha.

After accepting *sannyāsa* with the name Śrīmad Bhakti Sambal Bhāgavata Mahārāja, he participated in Vraja-maṇḍala Parikramā, and was among those who joined Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī in observing Ürja-*vrata* at Rādhā-kuṇḍa in 1935. Otherwise, on his *gurudeva's* order, he practiced *kṣetra-sannyāsa* in Māyāpur. His sons from his previous *āśrama* were well educated, and his wife thereof also accepted initiation from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.[10]

Śrīmad Bhakti Kevala Auḍulomi Mahārāja

Śrīmad Bhakti Kevala Auḍulomi Mahārāja was among Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's first disciples but, having taken an extended hiatus in secular life, one of the later sannyasis.

Born in 1895, Śrī Pramoda Bihārī was from early childhood exceptionally intelligent and devotionally inclined. At school he was always top in every subject and especially excelled in Sanskrit. Even in young age he was so sworn to truthfulness that his friends called him Yudhiṣṭhira or Bhīṣma. At age seventeen he fell deathly sick, and after all medical assistance had failed, in a delirious dreamlike state he chanted the *mahā-mantra* and was delivered. During his school years he founded a religious assembly for promoting *kīrtana,* scriptural study, and character building. In 1913, at age eighteen, an impelling urge arose in his heart to find a *sad*-guru to direct him on the spiritual path. His desire was fulfilled upon visiting Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī at the rented estate in Kalighat. Soon thereafter he was awarded *harināma* and *dīkṣā,* with the name Patita Pāvana dāsa.

One or two days later, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī sent Patita Pāvana Brahmacārī with a letter for Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura at Bhakti Bhavan. Engaged in *bhajana* when Patita Pāvana arrived, the Ṭhākura had him sit and wait. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was bearded from observing Cātur-māsya, and wearing only a *kaupīna*. After some time he called the boy into his presence. He motioned for Śrīmān Patita Pāvana to sit and others to leave. Smiling slightly, in a cheerful mood and deep voice he instructed him, "There is no scripture like *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* nothing comparable to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. You must read it. You must study it." This was the first time Patita Pāvana had ever heard of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Then with his fingers, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura lifted his eyebrows, which due to age had drooped over his eyes, and surveyed Patita Pāvana from head to toe.

During that period Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī was engaged mostly in writing, especially in preparing his *Anubhāṣya* on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta.* Once Patita Pāvana was sitting with him when the compositor brought a proof for checking. Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī indicated that it be shown to Patita Pāvana. The compositor doubted that this callow youth could understand such high-level Sanskrit, yet Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī affirmed, "This boy knows Sanskrit better than many *paṇḍitas*." Thus Patita Pāvana was inducted into proofreading.

In 1919 Patita Pāvana received a degree with honors from Calcutta University, after which he spent some time in Banaras to study Vedānta, putting up at the Ramakrishna Mission branch there. Subsequently he returned home to care for his widowed mother and junior siblings. He began teaching and soon was promoted to headmaster. He also undertook various humanitarian activities and became the area leader of Gandhi's movement.

In 1923 Patita Pāvana welcomed to his village his guru-*mahārāja* and thirty godbrothers. But because it was during Durgā-*pūjā,* the local inhabitants were too busy slaughtering sheep and buffalos to pay attention to the Vaiṣṇavas in their midst.

Although well respected in his village, Patita Pāvana felt no peace or satisfaction and thus resolved to dedicate his life for the real welfare work of preaching *śuddha-bhakti.* Hence, shortly after his mother's demise in 1933, he proceeded to Purī to reside at Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha. This news was intimated to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura by letter, upon reading which he immediately wrote a reply ordering that Patita Pāvana be put in charge of the Maṭha—which shocked Patita Pāvana as much as the other *maṭha-vāsīs.* As a natural leader and organizer, Patita Pāvana soon greatly improved the condition of the Maṭha by celebrating festivals elaborately, constructing new quarters for the *maṭha-vāsīs,* and endearing himself to all by his sweet modest nature and captivating scholarly lectures in both Bengali and English.

On the final day of Ürja-*vrata* in 1934 in Mathurā, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī awarded Patita Pāvana Prabhu *sannyāsa,* with the name Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Kevala Auḍulomi Mahārāja, and told him, "Had you stayed in the mission all these years the history of the Gauḍīya Maṭha would have been different." Thereafter Śrīmad Auḍulomi Mahārāja was sent to deliver lectures at the Delhi Gauḍīya Maṭha, and those discourses attracted the educated pious people of the locality.

In 1935 Śrīmad Auḍulomi Mahārāja was appointed to teach the elder students of the Thakur Bhakti Vinode Institute at Māyāpur, and for some time served as its rector. During this period he contributed to the *Nadia Prakash* several philosopical articles marked by their simplicity of style and depth of realization. He was also deputed by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to explain the intricacies of *śuddha-bhakti* to the Western devotees present in Māyāpur. Appointed as curator of the Thakur Bhakti Vinode Research Institute after its founding in 1936, Śrīmad Auḍulomi Mahārāja painstakingly collected from various places many old manuscripts and maps for the institute library and had some of them published. At the time of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's passing from this world, Śrīmad Bhakti Kevala Auḍulomi Mahārāja was *maṭha-rakṣaka* in Madras. In 1954 he became the institutional *ācārya* of the Gauḍīya Mission, the smaller of the two groups cleaved out of the original Gauḍīya Mission.

Śrīmad Bhakti Vicāra Jājābar Mahārāja

Śrī Sarveśvara Panda, an eighteen-year-old from a South Indian Vedic *brāhmaṇa* family settled in Midnapore, felt such ennui with worldly life that he fled home to Purī in search of a genuine sadhu. Prior to this, friends in whom he had confided his spiritual longings suggested he join the Ramakrishna Mission, but he had no interest in that society of flesh-eaters. On the train to Purī he encountered one of his father's friends, who asked where he was going. When Sarveśvara replied that he was seeking a guru, that gentleman tried to persuade him to return to their home village. Sarveśvara firmly retorted, "I will never go back."

While residing with a *pāṇḍā* in Purī, one morning when Sarveśvara was returning after bathing in the sea he came across Śrīmad Bodhāyana Mahārāja begging alms, whereupon he offered that sannyasi all the money he had with him. On Bodhāyana Mahārāja's inquiring, Sarveśvara revealed that he was seeking a guru who could give him genuine direction in life, so Mahārāja explained how to reach Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha. There the young man had *darśana* of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and immediately surrendered at his lotus feet, shortly afterward being initiated as Sarveśvara Brahmacārī.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī sent Sarveśvara Prabhu to Śrī Caitanya Maṭha to worship the deity and enroll in the Parā-vidyā-pīṭha. But deployed in preaching instead, and finding no time to study Sanskrit, Sarveśvara Prabhu resolved to return home for that purpose. Hearing of this, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī dispatched a senior disciple to intercept Sarveśvara Prabhu at Howrah station and bring him to the Maṭha at Ultadingi Road, where he drilled his irresolute disciple: "Attainment of Hari-*bhakti* is our chief desire. If that is gained, everything is gained. Our sole duty is to perform Kṛṣṇa-*bhajana* in the association of devotees, rejecting that of nondevotees. If for the sake of learning we fall into bad association, we will be deprived of Hari-*bhakti.*" Citing extensively from scripture, he pacified this young disciple's pendulous mind.

Meanwhile, Sarveśvara Prabhu's family members were still trying to find him. Yet not till about twelve years later, after he had accepted *sannyāsa* and was serving in Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, was he providentially discovered by a relative. Consequently he visited his previous family just once with his guru-*mahārāja's* permission and delivered Hari-*kathā* to them.

On Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's order, Sarveśvara Brahmacārī successively served as *maṭha-rakṣaka* in the Maṭhas at Patna, Prayāga, Banaras, and Gayā, being appreciated in each place for his lectures, sweet *kīrtanas,* and serene and sober nature. He much satisfied his guru-*mahārāja* by taking responsibility for the Gayā Maṭha under exacting circumstances, when no other capable devotee was available or willing to. Indeed he became empowered to rectify the situation and smoothly discharge the management.

Preaching in Gayā was adversely affected when a locally respected figure who was an ex-classmate of Sarveśvara's publicly slanged the Gauḍīya Maṭha after hearing Sarveśvara speak

against the teachings of a well-known "holy man." Sarveśvara informed Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura of this and received the reply:

> Our Gayā Maṭha has not been founded as fuel for the materialistic enjoyer's fire, or in pursuance of the *jñānīs'* undigested material desires; it has been established for propagating *śuddha-bhakti.* Our auspiciousness will be effected by serving the Lord according to the fundamental purpose of the Maṭha. You should know that simply getting one or two rupees for the benefit of the Maṭha is not our sole means of support.
>
> The *karma-kāṇḍa* of the *karmīs* and the high birth of worldly-minded persons are worth naught. You should not be enthusiastic to promote duplicity by giving enjoyment to materialistic enjoyers or afflating the Māyāvādīs' false pride. But if you can really help someone it will be by service to the Maṭha, whose object is to serve Kṛṣṇa:
>
> *karmaṇāṁ pariṇāmitvād ā-viriñcyād amaṅgalam*
> *vipaścin naśvaraṁ paśyed adṛṣṭam api dṛṣṭa-vat*
>
> Material activity is subject to constant transformation; thus from the planet of Lord Brahmā down there is simply inauspiciousness. A wise man can understand that just as everything he observes is subject to destruction, so also are all things that he cannot directly see. (SB 11.19.18)
>
> If you cannot grasp the meaning of this verse, you will fall into difficulties. Remaining as an enjoyer in this world, in the next life you will merge into the thralldom of the *guṇas.*[11]

When still relatively a junior, Śrī Sarveśvara Brahmacārī was the first disciple whom Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī asked to sing *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā-kīrtana.* By having a newcomer chant these privy stanzas in the presence of many experienced followers, apparently Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was indicating how simplicity is the main qualification for approaching the upper spheres of *bhajana.*

Sarveśvara Prabhu had been ten years in the mission when, in recognition of his zeal for preaching, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura called him from Gayā to Purī and told him to take *sannyāsa*. Yet because previously a godbrother had warned him not to take such a risk while still young, Sarveśvara fell at his master's feet, pleading, "I'm afraid to take *sannyāsa* now." Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura responded, "Why? You are on the path to the kingdom of fearlessness. If you go to the Himālayas, will there be any question of heat? You are on the way back to Godhead. *Sannyāsa* means one-pointed Hari-*bhajana.* There is no anxiety for those who take shelter at His fear-dispelling lotus feet, apart from which all else is a source of fear." He quoted *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta:*

> *etāṁ sa āsthāya parātma-niṣṭhām*
> *adhyāsitāṁ pūrvatamair mahadbhiḥ*
> *ahaṁ tariṣyāmi duranta-pāraṁ*

tamo mukundāṅghri-niṣevayaiva

[As a *brāhmaṇa* from Avantī-deśa had said:] I shall cross over the insurmountable ocean of nescience by serving the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. This process was approved by the previous *ācāryas,* who were fixed in firm devotion to the Lord, Paramātmā, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. (SB 11.23.57)

prabhu kahe—sādhu ei bhikṣura vacana
mukunda sevana-vrata kaila nirdhāraṇa

parātma-niṣṭhā-mātra veṣa-dhāraṇa
mukunda-sevāya haya saṁsāra-tāraṇa

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, "The mendicant devotee has spoken well. He has vowed to engage in service to Mukunda. The real purpose of accepting *sannyāsa* is to dedicate oneself to serving Mukunda, whereby one can be liberated from the bondage of material existence." (Cc 2.3.7–8)

Quoting many other verses, both in direct conversation and in subsequent letters, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī gradually convinced Sarveśvara, and on 30 May 1936, awarded him *sannyāsa* with the title Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Vicāra Jājābar Mahārāja.[*] He was the last *sannyāsa* initiate of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, who was so affectionate toward him that other disciples referred to Śrīmad Bhakti Vicāra Jājābar Mahārāj as the "youngest son" of their guru-*mahārāja.*[12†]

Bābājīs

Throughout the course of his preaching career Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī awarded *paramahaṁsa-veśa* (the dress of a *paramahaṁsa*) to thirteen disciples.[13] Except for being white, their attire was the same as that of Gauḍīya Maṭha sannyasis—a cotton cloth knotted at the neck and partially covering the upper body, and a lower piece wrapped around the waist and legs, reaching to or just above the ankles, without a *kaccha*—thus differing from the short off-white cloth (also called *paramahaṁsa-veśa,* or *bhek*) typical of non–Gauḍīya Maṭha *bābājīs.*

Addressed as "Bābājī Mahārāja," Gauḍīya Maṭha *bābājīs* were mostly older men whose family commitments had been fulfilled, who were serious in *bhajana* and renunciation yet unsuited for the dynamic outgoing preaching expected of sannyasis. Their *veśa* indicated that they were on the *paramahaṁsa* platform, or close to and aspiring for it, having forsworn all material attachments and dedicated their lives wholly to *bhajana.* They generally resided in Maṭhas in the *dhāmas* of Navadvīpa, Purī, and Vṛndāvana.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura performed *bābājīs'* initiation ceremonies according to the directions of *Saṁskāra-dīpikā.* Traditionally a sannyasi could not invest others as *bābājī,* for a *bābājī* is accepted as a *paramahaṁsa,* beyond designations of *varṇa* and *āśrama* and therefore above *sannyāsa*. Yet because Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was an eternally liberated *paramahaṁsa* even though dressed as a sannyasi, he was fully qualified to induct and instruct *bābājīs.*

In other Gauḍīya lines, higher-caste men who became *bābājīs* discarded their sacred thread to symbolize transcending caste identification. But Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's *bābājīs* retained the thread, having adopted it for spiritual reasons. And unlike *prākṛta-sahajiyā bābājīs,* they were not instructed in *līlā-smaraṇa* or permitted to study or discuss intimate *līlās* any more than were other members of the mission. They were expected to live plainly and austerely yet not attempt the severe asceticism that traditionally characterized *bābājī* life—simply dedicating their lives to unpretentious *bhajana* of constant *śravaṇa-kīrtana.* A few occasionally lectured at the Maṭha, but usually not at outside functions. During the day some would go out for *bhikṣā* and *nagara-saṅkīrtana,* or might stay behind and help in *arcana* or other services within the Maṭha. One Mukunda Bābājī was so spry and enthusiastic in collecting funds in Bara Bazar, the commercial district of Calcutta, that younger men found it tough to keep pace with him as he tirelessly marched up and down stairs all day entering offices and soliciting donations.

Some devotees to whom Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura gave *paramahaṁsa-veśa* had clearly attained that level, being so absorbed in *bhajana* that often they were unaware of the world around them, even when time for honoring *mahā-prasāda.* For instance, once a *bābājī* joined the other devotees to go for *nagara-saṅkīrtana;* upon exiting the Maṭha they stopped just outside the gate and chanted there for two hours. When they finished, someone said, "Mahārāja, we chanted throughout the town for two hours." He agreed, "Yes, yes! We walked all around!"

Śrīpāda Rādhā-Govinda dāsa Bābājī

Throughout his life, Śrī Rajanīkānta Basu had been performing *bhakti* so seriously that neither he nor any of his family would take even water—let alone any food item—unless it had been offered in *arcana* and received as *prasāda.* In old age, having understood from Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's writings the need to accept a genuine spiritual guru, he disaffiliated himself from the Narottama-*parivāra* he had been initiated into during childhood and, along with his whole family, found shelter at the lotus feet of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

Although his two eldest sons became initiated by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda, that gentleman waited longer, and was very old when he eventually received *dīkṣā* from Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, with the name Śrī Rādhā-Govinda dāsa Adhikārī. Thereafter Rādhā-Govinda Prabhu resided mostly in Māyāpur, Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, or Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Notwithstanding his age, he performed *bhajana* with such alacrity and fervor that in 1933 Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura decorated him with the title Bhakti Nidhi (ocean, or treasure, of devotion). Bhakti Nidhi Prabhu would unfailingly attend all Maṭha services, dancing exuberantly and stylishly in *kīrtana,* and spend several hours daily chanting *japa.* He would loudly and extensively pronounce *jaya-dhvani* after *ārati,* reciting the name of each Maṭha under the Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā and the deities therein. He would do the same on the railway platform before departing for a journey, continuing for up to half an hour and thus sometimes missing the train. Among his many *jayas* was *kapaṭa mānuṣa ki jaya!:* "Victory to the Deceptive Man!" He would explain that Gaurāṅga is Godhead come in the guise of a man, hence *kapaṭa mānuṣa.*[*]

Bhakti Nidhi Prabhu was similarly enthusiastic in offering *daṇḍavat,* and at least once did so 108 times at the lotus feet of his guru-*mahārāja.* Each year he performed the entire Navadvīpa-dhāma Parikramā on foot, refusing the help of any vehicle, and moreover rendered various services. In 1932 he similarly completed Vraja-maṇḍala Parikramā. When visited by his sons and their families, Bhakti Nidhi Prabhu never discussed worldly affairs with them, but exclusively advised them regarding Hari-*bhajana.* He had deep taste for *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* relishing every verse and explaining it to others.

Bhakti Nidhi Prabhu had special affection for small boys, and by distributing *mahā-prasāda* sweets would induce them to chant *harināma.* He once told Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, "I am not much welcomed when I go for *bhikṣā,* because after I give *mahā-prasāda* to lads they want to follow me, and their parents fear that they'll become sadhus." Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī replied, "It's like people who enjoy scrumptious food in another's house and later nitpick that the yogurt was too sour. Similarly, even though you sincerely perform Hari-*sevā,* some people will blame you. Don't be disturbed by their querulousness."

Seeing the eighty-two-year-old Rādhā-Govinda Prabhu as fit for *paramahaṁsa-veśa,* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura inducted him on 5 October 1934, renaming him Śrī Rādhā-Govinda dāsa Bābājī, and on that evening also bestowed the *śrī-nṛsiṁha-mantra-rāja* and gave to him as *prasāda* one of his own used outer cloths.[*] On Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's order Rādhā-Govinda

dāsa Bābājī relocated to Purī-*dhāma,* where at Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha he continued performing *bhajana* with relish. There he never allowed anyone to render him personal service, being vigilant that no one could do so even clandestinely.

On 4 October 1936 at Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha, while chanting *japa* on his beads shortly before 9:40 p.m., Bābājī Mahārāja repeatedly requested the devotees present to perform loud *mahā-mantra kīrtana* and call out the names of guru and Gaurāṅga. Amid their *nāma-saṅkīrtana,* he breathed his last by uttering the holy names.[14]

Five

Profiles of Other Disciples

Śrīpāda Rohiṇī Kumāra Prabhu and Śrīpāda Veṇī Mādhava Prabhu

Several young men approached Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī while he was performing *bhajana* in Vrajapattana in the years prior to his *sannyāsa*.*

Rohiṇī Kumāra Ghoṣa, an educated youth from East Bengal, left home and went to Navadvīpa in search of spiritual guidance. But he became ensnared by a *bāula* guru and his mistress, whom Rohiṇī Kumāra was instructed to address as father and mother, even though they were actually sinful rascals and cheaters. One day he went to Māyāpur to see Lord Caitanya's birthplace, and was fortunate enough to arrive when Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī was lecturing at the Śrī Gaura-Viṣṇupriyā temple. Enthralled, the young seeker listened intently for a long time.

On returning to the *bāulas,* Rohiṇī Kumāra feigned illness and, without eating, lay down, meditating upon Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's words and ideas until falling asleep. In a nightmare he saw the *bāula* couple coming as a tiger and tigress to devour him, and out of fear he remembered the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya. At that moment Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī appeared in the dream, chased the tigers away, and ushered Rohiṇī Kumāra toward Māyāpur. The nightmare broke, and Rohiṇī Kumāra awoke to see that it was morning. He immediately proceeded to Māyāpur and found shelter in Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī, becoming his first initiated disciple. This was in 1906, during which another young man was initiated, as Śrī Veṇī Mādhava dāsa.

After some days a relative came and took Śrīmān Rohiṇī Kumāra back to his family home, where he continued his newfound practice of *śuddha-bhakti* as a householder. Referring to him in later times, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would say, “He was one of my first friends.”

Śrīpāda Vaiṣṇava Prabhu

Another youth who sought shelter of Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī in Māyāpur in the early stage of his vow to chant a billion names was Śrīmān Aśvinī Haldar, from neighboring Ballāl Dīghi. Although illiterate, by hearing from Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī he became learned in Vaiṣṇava philosophy and respected for his sagacity. Initiated as Vaiṣṇava dāsa, he performed personal services to his guru-*mahārāja,* and was known for his sweet singing and joyful nature.

Śrīpāda Paramānanda Vidyāratna Prabhu

During the late 1870s while posted as deputy magistrate at Narail, Jessore District, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura occasionally ventured out by houseboat and horseback to inspect the

surrounding areas, and in the evenings, would hold impromptu *kīrtana* and lecture programs. When he was once discoursing in Vinodanagar village, among the many listeners was the young Tāriṇī Caraṇa Samaddar, a classmate of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda's first son Annadā Prasāda. As did almost all respectable families, Śrī Tāriṇī Caraṇa's relatives sent gifts of homemade sweets to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

The people of Vinodanagar never forgot this great Vaiṣṇava who had appeared in their midst, and continued to associate with him through his writings. Local villagers who visited nearby Navadvīpa would return with news of the ongoing Vaiṣṇava revival transpiring there—of the Ṭhākura's having discovered the true birthplace of Śrīman Mahāprabhu at Māyāpur, of the extraordinary renunciant Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī who shunned other *bābājīs* yet associated with the householder Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and of a special son of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's, the materially and spiritually exceptionally qualified Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī, who had left all prospects of worldly progress to sit in the desolate jungle of Māyāpur simply to chant incessantly the *mahā-mantra:* Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Śrī Tāriṇī Caraṇa's son Pañcānana grew up hearing such discussions, which inspired in him a desire for the saintly life. One night in 1910, at age twelve, he ran away from home desiring to visit Navadvīpa and Rishikesh. Journeying by foot, boat, and rail (seeing a railroad for the first time in his life), he reached Navadvīpa somewhat before sunrise on the next day and immediately searched out the famous temple advertised as Mahāprabhu's birthplace. But as he eagerly rushed to enter, he was halted by a grating voice: "Three annas donation to be given." Distraught, the lad turned back and sat in the veranda of a Śiva temple, wondering what to do. "The all-merciful Lord Gaurāṅga distributed Kṛṣṇa-*prema* door to door to one and all," he mused, "so why has He has not let me in His door today?" Just then he overheard two gentlemen returning from bathing in the Gaṅgā, discussing that the real birthplace of Śrī Caitanya was in Māyāpur. This jogged Pañcānana's memory—he had heard such talk before—and he immediately inquired how to go to Māyāpur. Upon arriving there, he attained a boon rarely achieved in thousands of pilgrimages: refuge at the lotus feet of a self-realized *ācārya*.

Some months later a female devotee named Śrīmatī Vidyullatā Ghoṣa came to Vrajapattana and served Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī with the affection of an elder sister. While expertly preparing many varieties of sumptuous food, she engaged Pañcānana to help, whereby he learned the culinary art. Śrīmatī Vidyullatā-devī called him Paramānanda, and in 1913 Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī initiated him with that name.

This boy lived with and was treated by Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī as if his own dear son. At night Paramānanda slept by Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's side, and in the predawn hours Siddhānta Sarasvatī would call, "Paramānanda! Get up. Chant the holy names." "Oh... oh..." Paramānanda would groan in protest. But Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī was firm—"'Oh, oh' will not do"—and made sure that Paramānanda rose.

While residing in Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's base in Calcutta in 1913, at the urging of relatives

Paramānanda resumed secular schooling, which he later continued in Kuliyā. In early 1914 he fled to Māyāpur to escape the cholera engulfing Kuliyā, but after only a few days he returned, even though the epidemic was still raging. The following day he too suddenly collapsed as if dead. Upon receiving news that evening, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī sent two devotees to care for Śrīmān Paramānanda. Despite rain, storm, and unlikelihood of any means to cross the raging Gaṅgā, they somehow arrived around three o'clock in the morning, happy to see at Paramānanda's bedside a doctor, who had tended him throughout the night. By this time the boy had slightly regained consciousness, and was informed of Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's blessings for a swift recovery. By mid-morning Paramānanda had miraculously recuperated, and defying the prohibition of the doctor and others, he set off toward Vrajapattana for *darśana* of his guru's lotus feet. Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī was delightedly astonished when shortly before sundown Paramānanda appeared before him, fallen at his feet. And Paramānanda realized that the true mercy of those lotus feet was not merely relief from a trifling attack of cholera, but deliverance from the repeating cycle of disease, old age, death, and rebirth.

Shortly thereafter, Paramānanda had the chance to serve Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in Godruma for some days while the Ṭhākura's regular assistant, his disciple and nigh constant companion Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī, was staying with Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī in Māyāpur, recovering from sickness. Just before leaving Godruma, only three weeks before departing this world, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura told Paramānanda, "I don't see any need for you to continue with mundane studies meant for earning money. Better that you serve your *gurudeva* and gain the highest benefit. I won't be here much longer, so rather than joining me in Calcutta, go to Māyāpur to your guru's lotus feet. As long as he remains present on this plane, serve him with mind, body, and words. You have well cared for me, and accordingly Mahāprabhu will look after you." While seeing Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura off from Krishnanagar station, wherefrom Paramānanda was to go to Māyāpur to tell Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī to meet the Ṭhākura in Calcutta, Paramānanda received many instructions from him. That was Paramānanda's last *darśana* of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

With Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's permission, Paramānanda once went from Māyāpur to Kuliyā for *darśana* of Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī. He presented a few green chilis, which Bābājī Mahārāja would take with soaked raw rice or dal as his only food. Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja asked Paramānanda, "How is my *prabhu*?" and then said, "Please convey my respect to him, and on my behalf tell him that he should leave aside all other works and preach the message of *Ṣaṭ-sandarbha*."[*]

There being no one else available to manage the Bhāgavata Press when it was first established, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī appointed Paramānanda, an inexperienced youth. That became a major post, for Paramānanda proved competent in producing not only publications but also considerable income (from commercial jobs)—both vital factors in the flourishing of the mission. Hence Paramānanda Prabhu was gradually allotted other important services, including overseeing the construction of several temples.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura loved Paramānanda, no doubt because from childhood Paramānanda had lived with, served, and assisted him in the early days in Māyāpur when he was otherwise alone. Reciprocally, Paramānanda was much attached to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and even later when many others could have done so, he rendered personal services to him such as cooking, washing his clothes, managing his travel arrangements, and massaging his feet at night. If returning to the Maṭha after Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had retired, still Paramānanda would knock on the door and call, "Prabhupāda, Prabhupāda," until let in to administer massage. Paramānanda Prabhu was one of the few disciples whom Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura addressed as *tumi,* and he related with his guru-*mahārāja* in a familiar manner that none of his godbrothers could consider imitating. He was the only disciple who addressed Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura as *tumi,* sat on the same level with him, and spoke with him freely and informally and even joked with him. Nor did Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura rebuke Paramānanda Prabhu for any of that.

But Paramānanda Prabhu went too far when upon first seeing Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura wearing a wristwatch he commented, "Prabhupāda, your *vairāgya* has much reduced." Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura furiously chastised him, and then explained what Paramānanda should have known: real *vairāgya* is *yukta-vairāgya.*

During the time when Paramānanda was serving him, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura often had him sing selections from *Śaraṇāgati,* which had been issued serially in *Sajjana-toṣaṇī.* Some years later, as the manager of Bhāgavata Press, Paramānanda Prabhu was publishing *Sajjana-toṣaṇī,* then under the aegis of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī subsequent to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's departure. One night in a dream Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura ordered, "Paramānanda! Without delay collect the songs of *Śaraṇāgati* from back copies of *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* and produce them as a book. Then by reading, chanting, and hearing them, many people will be tremendously transcendentally benefited." Paramānanda Prabhu did so, and also featured in *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* a poem of his own composition, "Kṛpādeśa" (Merciful instruction), describing that wonderful dream. On Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's order, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's first daughter Śrīmatī Saudāminī financed the publishing of *Śaraṇāgati,* which soon underwent multiple reprints in the scripts of several languages, becoming recognized as comparable to Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura's classics *Prārthanā* and *Prema-bhakti-candrikā.*

Although Paramānanda Prabhu performed omnifarious responsible services, he sometimes behaved frivolously. When he once called Jati Śekhara Prabhu to see a *yātrā,* Jati Śekhara objected, "Guru-mahārāja doesn't approve of this." But Paramānanda did not heed, so in deference to his seniority Jati Śekhara reluctantly accompanied him. Next morning the episode came to the attention of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who remarked, "Paramānanda has a license to do whatever he likes."

By his guru-*mahārāja's* blessings Paramānanda Prabhu became learned in devotional topics, a good writer of both prose and poetry, and skilled in various fine arts. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura awarded him the titles Vidyāratna, Bhakti Kuñjara, and Upadeśaka, and appointed him one of the three trustees of the Gauḍīya Mission.

A few years before Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's departure from this world, Paramānanda thought he should go higher in devotional life. Against his guru-*mahārāja's* explicit order, he read Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi,* an esoteric treatise on dealings between Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*. Before long he returned to his family home, wherefrom Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura eventually received a letter stating that arrangements were being made for Paramānanda's marriage. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura sent Vāsudeva Prabhu to try to bring Paramānanda back, but to no avail. Deeply disappointed, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura berated himself as "a fool and a rascal," whose association had caused (what he regarded as) this disciple's downfall. He cited this to presage others that even senior and accomplished devotees can at any time capitulate to *māyā*, and penned a letter to "Paramahaṁsa":

> Today I received your missive dated 29 July, written in red ink and sent from a Calcutta address. Rai Bāhādura gave you the title Paramahaṁsa, and today that has been fulfilled. It is now proven that internally you deem service to your mother far more important than serving Hari-guru-Vaiṣṇavas. Your affection for sons has drenched you in *vātsalya-rasa,* and thus you have dispelled the *māyā* created by me and entered into the world of *yoga-māyā*![*] I have no more to say about this. After being bound in *saṁsāra* a devotee complained, "Why did you not protect me from the maws of death? Why did you not remind me of the example of Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa?" Whatever the case, I am reminded of the following from *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (3.4.46–47):
>
> *sei bhakta dhanya, ye nā chāḍe prabhura caraṇa*
> *sei prabhu dhanya, ye nā chāḍe nija-jana*
>
> *durdaive sevaka yadi yāya anya sthāne*
> *sei ṭhākura dhanya tāre cule dhari' āne*
>
> Glorious is that devotee who does not give up the shelter of his Lord, and glorious is that Lord who does not abandon His servant. If by chance a servant goes somewhere else, glorious is that master who snatches him by the hair and drags him back.
>
> By your nineteen-page missive full of duplicity and cant, you might be able to forget my affection for you. Due to agitation of the strong uncontrolled senses, the natural propensity of the bound *jīva* is to reject Hari-*sevā.* In the present era Śrīmad Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has repeatedly said:
>
> *jāta-śraddho mat-kathāsu nirviṇṇaḥ sarva-karmasu*
> *veda duḥkhātmakān kāmān parityāge 'py anīśvaraḥ*
>
> *tato bhajeta māṁ prītaḥ śraddhālur dṛḍha-niścayaḥ*
> *juṣamāṇaś ca tān kāmān duḥkhodarkāṁś ca garhayan*
>
> Having awakened faith in the narrations of My glories, being disgusted with all material activities, knowing that all sense gratification leads to misery, but still being unable to

renounce all sense enjoyment, My devotee should remain happy and worship Me with great faith and conviction. Even though he is sometimes engaged in sense enjoyment, My devotee knows that all personal indulgence leads to a miserable result, and sincerely repents such activities. (SB 11.20.27–28)

It is not that the innocent should be diverted like you, by covering the meaning of the above verses. You could not absorb yourself in all the topics that your fellow students have till now kept secret from you. Therefore you should understand that I, considering your present engagement and what is the proper remedial medicine for a weak person, cannot take the position of raising chickens for a meat-eater and treat your current mundane consciousness in the manner of adding ghee to a fire.

Although in every birth we get a father and mother, not in every birth can we obtain auspicious teachings. Those who have heard your present talk lament for you. It is better that one does not treat his own disease.

With one eye I confirm all the accusations and attacks you made against me; yet I will not support you.[*] By brazenly assuming the role of a rooster you can deprive me of your affection. But I have not attained that stage of *paramahaṁsa.* I remain among the men of low consciousness.

Your dependent,

guru in name only.[1]

When after some days Paramānanda Prabhu returned to visit the Maṭha, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura instructed other disciples that, notwithstanding this former long-time *brahmacārī's* now being a *gṛhastha,* they should offer *daṇḍavat* to and respect him as much as previously.

A few days before departing this world, Paramānanda Prabhu took *sannyāsa* from Śrīmad B.V. Tīrtha (formerly Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu), with the name Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Gaurava Giri Mahārāja.

Śrīpāda Kuñja Bihārī Vidyābhūṣaṇa Prabhu

In search for a cogent understanding of spiritual knowledge, Umāpati, a young man from Jessore District working as a post office clerk in Calcutta, had been visiting various sadhus, yet despite much inquiry had received only unsatisfactory answers. Some friends advised him to simply stick with the *jāta-gosāñi* he was initiated by, and not meander here and there. But Umāpati had no faith in the anodyne Vaiṣṇavism that he had circumstantially been formally inducted into; like many educated young Bengalis, he had surmised that Vaiṣṇavas were a class of illiterate scoundrels. Nevertheless, on the insistence of his friends and also out of personal curiosity, on Gaura-*jayantī* of 1914 he journeyed to Navadvīpa along with an acquaintance, Śrī Sakhī Caraṇa Rāya, to see its sights and meet the resident *gosāñis.* At the home of one *gosāñi*

known to Sakhī Caraṇa, Umāpati, a vegetarian, became disgusted when he noticed fish in the meal offered them. Pushing the fish to one side and eating just a morsel of rice, he quickly rose and left.

The two pilgrims then went for *darśana* of Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, who explained to them a well-known verse from *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta:*

> *kṛṣṇa-bhakta niṣkāma, ataeva 'śānta'*
> *bhukti-mukti-siddhi-kāmī sakali 'aśānta'*
>
> A devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa is desireless and therefore peaceful. Those who desire material enjoyment, liberation, or material opulence cannot be peaceful. (Cc 2.19.149)

With Bābājī Mahārāja's blessings the young men then proceeded to Māyāpur, and on reaching that evening, were met by the brothers Ananta and Vanamālī Poddar and taken to see Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī, who explained to them the four verses from *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* that begin:[*]

> *brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva*
> *guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja:*
>
> Out of billions of living entities wandering throughout the universe according to their karma, one who is fortunate, by the combined mercy of guru and Kṛṣṇa receives the seed of the creeper of *bhakti.* (Cc 2.19.151)

Upon hearing Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's pellucid exposition, Umāpati was enthralled to discover that among the Vaiṣṇavas there exist *paṇḍitas* and philosophical deliberation. Yet also repelled by Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī's indictments of persons that he revered, Umāpati returned to Calcutta with little intention of again approaching Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī.

In November 1915 Umāpati revisited Navadvīpa seeking *darśana* of Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī—on the very day that Bābājī Mahārāja departed from this world.[†] Two days later he was sent to Māyāpur to invite Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī to a festival in Kuliyā in honor of Bābājī Mahārāja. Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī told him, "I am a sold-out animal at the lotus feet of my *gurudeva.* I have no independence. I don't know where I will take *prasāda.* Wherever Kṛṣṇa ordains that I get His remnants, there I fortunately partake of them." Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī continued to speak for two hours, during which Umāpati excitedly realized that even without asking he was now getting solutions to philosophical doubts that had vexed him for months. Not content to hear Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī for merely two hours, Umāpati rushed back to Calcutta, arranged a two-month leave from the post office, and returned to Māyāpur to regularly hear from Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī.

Yet still admiring the Ramakrishna Mission and other dubious outfits, Umāpati was disturbed to again hear Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī describe as rapscallions people he venerated as saints. He

was about to leave, but at Paramānanda Prabhu's urging he agreed to stay a few more days, during which he came to appreciate that Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī was indeed divine and thus begged to be initiated. Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī accepted Umāpati as a disciple, renamed him Kuñja Bihārī dāsa, and recognizing his competence in management, immediately engaged him in that capacity.

In later years Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura reflected that since his own nature was to be reclusive, inclined to philosophical pursuits and *nāma-bhajana*—he liked to speak the message of Mahāprabhu to educated men, but it was not his temperament to invite people or take responsibility for their accommodation and feeding—when such practical services were assumed by Kuñja Bihārī, he (Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura) accepted him as a godsend for spanning the breach between himself and the public. In all his activities Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura consulted Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu, relying heavily on him for business and temporal affairs. Thus the Gauḍīya Mission blossomed around the combination of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's spiritual magnitude and Kuñja Bihārī's worldly expertise.

Kuñjadā sacrificed his time, money, and very life in service to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, who repeatedly and publicly expressed gratitude toward him.* As inaugurator and overseer of all activities of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, Kuñjadā was considered the root of all service within it. Appointed secretary of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, he proved adept in choreographing, promoting, and managing its activities while maintaining a full-time post office job. Under his astute guidance the Gauḍīya Maṭha acquired and developed properties, published and distributed books, magazines, and newspapers, recruited and dispersed manpower for preaching, collected funds, and organized functions and festivals. One of his specialties was inspiring rich men to engage their money in Kṛṣṇa's service, through which he much increased the properties and prestige of the mission. At Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, as the *maṭha-rakṣaka* Kuñja Bihārī seemed omnipresent, overseeing the myriad activities, interacting with each devotee to ensure that their needs were taken care of and their services performed punctually and effectively, and that guests were properly tended. During festivals he often remained so busy that amid thousands being fed he would forgo food until last thing at night. And when the *metharas* of Calcutta declared a strike, he told the *maṭha-vāsīs,* "We don't need anyone to clean the outhouse. I'll do it."†

In the early phase of the mission, Kuñjadā thought it prudent not to approach the public for alms, lest they misunderstand the devotees' purpose. Thus he personally assumed financial responsibility for the rent, feeding of devotees and guests, and other expenses. However, on the modest income of a postal clerk he was able to fund the mission only by taking loans; nor did he inform Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī or others about that. Seeing his debts spiraling and finding no other means to repay them, and not wanting that blame accrue to his *gurudeva* or godbrothers, Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu obtained a well-paying appointment in Basra, Iraq. Knowing that his guru-*mahārāja* would not give him permission yet feeling that he must go nonetheless, he left in May 1920 without telling anyone.

At that time Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was in Māyāpur, supervising the excavation of the Rādhā-

kuṇḍa thereof. It was a wrenching shock to him and the other devotees when on 18 May he received news of Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu's departure. The devotees became anxious about the future of the mission that they were busily developing. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had begun large-scale missionary work on the urging of Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu, having entrusted the management to him and made expansive plans based on his commitment. Now suddenly he was gone. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was already so severely afflicted with a carbuncle that he thought he might soon expire. Yet despite all these setbacks he did not slacken his activities. He wrote to Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu in Basra:

> By this letter be informed of my blessings. Stay in a manner conducive to your physical welfare and chant the name of Śrī Hari. Do not undertake any task abruptly. Whatever you do, perform it with the future in mind. Apart from *nāma-kīrtana,* there is no other s*ādhana* or *bhajana* in this world. At the time of attaining perfection you will know all other things. With great fortitude and reliance upon Kṛṣṇa you have gone to a foreign land, and as a result, in this crucial state we are able to mentally see you. I never approve impulsive endeavors prompted by lack of proper consideration.
>
> Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī had four occupations: (1) to reclaim lost holy places, (2) to preach the conclusion of devotion, (3) to establish Vaiṣṇava *smṛti* and society, and (4) to manifest the deity of Śrī Madana-mohana to the populace. Following him, all of you who are more dear to me than my life-breath and my very self, should endeavor to perform these four activities to the best of your ability. While remaining in this world, perform these four works, and afterward you will attain Śrī Gaura-Kṛṣṇa's mercy. Uphold *bhakti-siddhānta,* which is the Vaiṣṇava understanding of Vedānta.
>
> May Śrī Vārṣabhānavī bestow mercy upon you. I am inferior to you in simplicity and renunciation of material objects. Your love for me is the subject of my constant remembrance. If in any future birth I can become a renunciant like you, then certainly Kṛṣṇa will be able to bestow mercy upon me. With utmost enthusiasm, all of you continue the activities that I have begun. In so doing, love for Rādhā-Govinda will awaken.
>
> It will be good if you can directly see me. Otherwise, you will be able to see me through all these activities.[2*]

In November 1921 Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu arrived in Dacca while Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was completing the last of a thirty-day series of discourses on the first verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. As Kuñja Bihārī was falling prostrate at his feet, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī lifted him up and clasped him to his chest as both shed tears of joy. Kuñjadā was back! And he again took charge of organizing Gauḍīya Maṭha activities.

Apart from its conventional implication, the name Kuñjadā was also understood as "who gives (*dā*) entrance to the grove (*kuñja*) of guru-*sevā,*" apropos for one who directly or indirectly oversaw the engagement of many members of the Mission. He was described as "service personified."[3] Although Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura conferred honorific titles upon many of his

disciples, Kuñja Bihārī was unique in being accoladed with two—Vidyābhūṣaṇa and Bhāgavata-ratna (jewel among exalted devotees). Kuñjadā became further known as guru-*preṣṭha* (dear to guru), Prabhupāda-*preṣṭha* (dear to Prabhupāda), and in English, the "beloved counterpart" of his guru.[4] His reputation was such that *brahmacārīs* would queue to receive his *prasāda* remnants in hope of imbibing his mood of dedication to their guru-*mahārāja,* and thus be entitled to enter the guru-*sevā-kuñja.*[*] And whenever disciples approached to offer *daṇḍavat* to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in a place where Kuñja Bihārī was present, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would ask if they had first offered respects to Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu. If not, even if they were sannyasis, he would send them to do so.

The *Gauḍīya* (2.25) bore the following description of Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu:

> *śarīraṁ vasu vijñānaṁ vāsaḥ karma guṇān asūn*
> *gurv-arthaṁ dhārayed yas tu sa śiṣyo netaraḥ smṛtaḥ*
>
> One whose body, wealth, knowledge, possessions, activities, qualities, and very life are maintained only for the sake of his guru is a genuine disciple, not others.
>
> In the personage of this mahatma, not for one day, not for two days, but always and at every moment have I observed this ideal. I had read the *guru-devatātmā* verse in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and heard the *śruti* mantra *yathā deve tathā gurau* explained.[†] But at those times of reading or hearing there was no realization, nor even an idea that such could be possible. Yet such a truly adverse person as myself has been able to realize this principle by seeing it written daily in blazing letters on every page of the book of this jewel-like devotee's life. It appears that this mahatma has descended to the world to teach by his personal example this model of service. Whoever out of great fortune and with a sincere and non-envious disposition has an opportunity to observe the character of this mahatma will become wonderstruck and himself inclined to service by seeing his unending qualities.

In the new Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, which Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu was instrumental in acquiring and constructing, a poem composed by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was inscribed on a column:

> The secretary of the Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Ācāryatrika Śrīpāda Kuñja Bihārī Vidyābhūṣaṇa, is:
>
> the main pillar in the grand temple of the Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha;
>
> the prime cause of the flourishing of the life and service of the Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha institution of service;
>
> the original architect in creating the Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha;
>
> the principal minister for the waking and development of Śrīla Jagabandhu's service

attitude;

the central jewel in the Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha's jewelled necklace of devotees;

the very form of service to *śrī-guru,* and the dearest to *śrī-guru;*

the most distinguished assistant in fulfilling the *mano-'bhīṣṭa* of *śrī-guru;*

the foremost teacher of service to *śrī-guru,* and the crest-jewel of tolerant service;

the person dedicated to the service of the servitors of *śrī-guru* and who invites the world to the service of Hari and guru;

and the topmost friend of the Gauḍīyas.

When Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura visited Mysore he was accompanied by several Gauḍīya Maṭha leaders, but he wanted Kuñja Bihārī also to come, and called him via a telegram sent to Calcutta. When Kuñjadā arrived within just three or four days, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura asked him how he had come so quickly—after all, he had responsibilities as a post office employee—to which Kuñjadā replied, "I am always ready for your service. I perform my duties well in advance so that if ever I need to leave at short notice I can easily get sanction."

In later years, near the time of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's departure, Kuñja Bihārī became the object of certain accusations by godbrothers convinced of his wrongdoings. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī did not disaffirm such charges, yet appreciating that managing the institution was not easy, and recognizing the multiple burdens Śrī Kuñja Bihārī had accepted to expand the mission, he expressed indebtedness and declared that by Kuñja Bihārī's having made arrangements for him to speak to the educated public, he had served him best among all disciples.

After Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's *tirobhāva,* Śrī Kuñja Bihārī Vidyābhūṣaṇa took *sannyāsa,* with the name Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Vilāsa Tīrtha Mahārāja, and throughout his life continued to oversee the Śrī Caitanya Maṭha and associated branches.

In a letter of 1920, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī intimated that Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu's *siddha-svarūpa* was Vimalā Mañjarī.[*]

Śrīpāda Vinoda Bihārī Kṛtiratna Prabhu

Śrī Vinoda Bihārī was born on 1 January 1898 as the second son of Śrī Śarat-candra Guha, a wealthy and pious landowner from the village of Banaripara, Barisal District, East Bengal. His elder brother was Śrī Pramoda Bihārī, and their paternal aunts were Śrīmatī Sarojavāsinī devī dāsī and Śrīmatī Priyatamā devī dāsī, the first and second women disciples of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.[†] The devotion and learning of these ladies much influenced the early life of the young

Pramoda and Vinoda.

In 1915 Śrīmatī Sarojavāsinī and Śrīmatī Priyatamā took Pramoda and Vinoda to Māyāpur, where Vinoda received his first *darśana* of Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī, to whom he immediately resolved to dedicate his life. Upon coming to the asylum of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's lotus feet, Pramoda and Vinoda vowed never to marry. Upon Śrī Vinoda Bihārī's initiation in 1916 his name was not changed. In 1918 he left his university studies and all else to fully join the mission. In the early days he preached by walking from village to village between Krishnanagar and Calcutta, subsisting by begging a little rice and eating it with wild spinach.

Although Vinoda Bihārī had been educated only up to secondary school level, he became well learned in *śāstra,* especially *Vedānta-sūtra* and its numerous expositions. He was particularly fascinated by and made a special study of his guru-*mahārāja's* deep opposition to Māyāvāda. Noting this, when sending him out to preach, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī instructed him to prove the falsity of that theory.

As the son of a zamindar and well qualified for administrative duties, from 1922 Vinoda Bihārī was engaged in managing the properties of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha and the Yogapīṭha, including extensive local fields and pockets of donated land in outlying parts of Bengal. He was also appointed manager of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's ancestral estate in Orissa. A portion of that land was rented out and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī received a share of the revenue, so every year Vinoda Bihārī was sent with several other disciples to collect rent from the tenants. From 1922 Śrī Vinoda Bihārī also organized and managed the Navadvīpa-dhāma Parikramā.

Among his godbrothers he was informally and affectionately known as Vinoda Babu, and to help create the impression of a respectable and powerful zamindar he dressed babu-style, with the hem of his dhoti tucked into the pocket of his *pāñjābī* and wearing gold-rimmed spectacles given to him by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. Vinoda Babu directed activities while seated in the umbrage of the expansive jackfruit tree at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha. Sometimes he would be seen patrolling on horseback.

Vinoda Prabhu was physically strong and fearless, and like other leading managers of the mission, could be tough when required, as it sometimes was, especially in dealing with certain curmudgeonly villagers in the remote and largely unpoliced area that was Māyāpur in the early twentieth century. And although Vinoda Prabhu's methods were not always as expected of saintly persons, they were effective—locals inclined to cause trouble knew and feared him.

A zamindar of Navadvīpa had donated land to the Maṭha in Māyāpur, but the Muslims farming it refused to give due payment. To punish and affront them, Vinoda Prabhu had them tied to the jackfruit tree at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha and mud put on their heads.* On hearing of this Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura said, "We are sadhus. We should not harrow others. Give them *prasāda* and let them go."

A man who could get things done, Vinoda Prabhu was sent here and there to help sort out the

administrative hitches and glitches that ineluctably arose at various Maṭhas. He became so expert in legal matters that his advice was respected even by reputed lawyers. Seeing his constant involvement in management and legal affairs, some of his godbrothers wrote a letter to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī expressing doubt that Vinoda Bihārī was really a Vaiṣṇava. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī wrote back forcefully defending Vinoda Bihārī Prabhu, citing his good qualities and erudition, his enthusiasm for *bhajana,* and above all, his dedication to serving Hari-guru-Vaiṣṇavas.

At the annual convention of the Navadvīpa-dhāma-pracāriṇī Sabhā in 1932, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura formally expressed appreciation of Vinoda Bihārī's worldly-wise Kṛṣṇa-*sevā* by awarding him the title Kṛtiratna (jewel of accomplishers). And at the 1934 meeting of the Sabhā, he further decorated Kṛtiratna Prabhu with the designation Upadeśaka.

On three occasions preparations were made for Kṛtiratna Prabhu to take *sannyāsa,* but other devotees dissuaded Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī from inducting him lest his managerial services be affected. Yet finally, after the *tirobhāva* of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, Kṛtiratna Prabhu took *sannyāsa* when so ordered by him in a dream, in which also the *sannyāsa* name to be formally conferred was revealed: Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja.

Śrīpāda Ananta Vāsudeva Parāvidyābhūṣaṇa Prabhu

Widely considered the most brilliant, and undoubtedly the most enigmatic, of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's disciples, Ananta Vāsudeva Parāvidyābhūṣaṇa Prabhu was born in 1895 as the youngest brother of Jagadīśa Basu (later to be Śrīmad B.P. Tīrtha Mahārāja) and named Ananta. From childhood he was attracted to *kīrtana* and *śāstra.* By age eight he had memorized parts of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata,* and *Bhagavad-gītā*. He became expert in playing *mṛdaṅga* and would sing for hours, especially the compositions of Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, in his connaturally melodious voice.

At age sixteen while a student at Berhampur, Murshidabad District, Bengal, Ananta went to Calcutta to join his father and brother Yogīndra in a parade welcoming the visiting George V, emperor of India. But being more eager to see the emperors among the Vaiṣṇavas, he accompanied his father and Yogīndra to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's Bhakti Bhavan. Upon entering they saw the Ṭhākura seated on a wooden *āsana,* with Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī sitting at his feet chanting *japa.* Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī remained at a little distance on the veranda. After they had prostrated to the venerable Ṭhākura, he smilingly spoke the benedictory words *tomāder maṅgala hauk* (Let there be auspiciousness for you) and then said, "It is good to go see the king. Under his rule we are able to chant the holy names without disturbances. That the British are tolerant of our religious practices is to our advantage."

In 1912 Ananta again had *darśana* of Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī at Kashimbazar, and then again in Calcutta in 1915 and 1916 at remembrance meetings for Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, which were addressed by many leading personalities of Bengal.[*]

While completing his studies at Calcutta University, Ananta stayed with his brother Jagadīśa, who was living on the same lane as Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu and was his intimate friend. In their company he returned to Bhakti Bhavan in early 1918. Ananta was disconcerted by assertions of the Brahmo Samāj founder Rāmmohan Roy and others posing as learned religious leaders, who by their erroneous propaganda were vilifying Vaiṣṇava dharma and misleading the supposedly educated youth of Bengal toward atheistic views. He asked Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī if the allegations of these formidable enemies of Vaiṣṇavism could be countered, and if so, by what arguments, and when it might happen. In particular, he wanted to know if charges against the significance of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* could be refuted, and if by unbreakable logic it could be established that the conclusions of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* represent Vedānta philosophy. Before responding, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī instructed Ananta to sing a *bhajana*.[†] Astonished, Ananta asked Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī how he knew him to be a *kīrtanīyā,* and Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī just laughed mildly. Ananta then chanted Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's composition beginning *kabe ha'be bolo se-dina āmāra,* and all present seemed to appreciate the recitation. It was likely that most had never heard that *kīrtana* before, as it had been published only recently. Thereafter, in resonant tone and in much detail, Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī dismantled the propositions of the anti-party and declared that their cheating must be publicized. When Ananta finally left that day, he was relieved of an angst that had been gnawing him for months, and was convinced that a singular person capable of replying to those atheists had now been sent to the world.

Ananta started to associate thickly with Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu and hear Hari-*kathā* from him. In early 1918 he graduated from Calcutta University in the first class. Then on the night preceding Gaura-*jayantī* in March 1918, he was suddenly called by Kuñjadā to accompany him to Māyāpur—the news was out that Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī was to take *sannyāsa.*

It was Ananta's first visit to Māyāpur. Along with several others, he received *dīkṣā* on the day after Gaura-*pūrṇimā,* and was renamed Ananta Vāsudeva after the famous deity of Kṛṣṇa in Bhubaneswar. Later Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī titled him Parāvidyābhūṣaṇa (decorated with transcendental knowledge). Often he was referred to informally as Vāsudeva Prabhu.

Although from the beginning he was part of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's inner coterie, it was not until May 1920 that Vāsudeva Prabhu left all material commitments to join the mission as a completely dedicated *brahmacārī.*

Once from within a room, Vāsudeva Prabhu was singing a *kīrtana* of his own composition beginning *ohe premera ṭhākura gorā.* Unknown to him, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was standing outside listening. Afterward Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura expressed appreciation of that song and subsequently had it published in *Sajjana-toṣaṇī.*[5]

Vāsudeva Prabhu was instrumental in introducing the first annual observance of Vyāsa-*pūjā,* on Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's *āvirbhāva-tithi* in 1924, during which he revealed *praṇāma-mantras* honoring his *gurudeva.* Thereafter these mantras were congregationally chanted

matutinally each day in every Gauḍīya Maṭha. Vāsudeva Prabhu also composed *praṇāma-mantras* for Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī.* Moreover, he introduced the stating of *aṣṭottara-śata-śrī* and *oṁ viṣṇupāda* in formal writing and utterance (especially in the *jaya-dhvani*) of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's name. Similarly, Vāsudeva Prabhu introduced usage of *cid-vilāsa* in conjunction with Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's name to indicate his wholly transcendental position within the Lord's personal retinue.† Another of his lasting contributions to the legacy of the Gauḍīya Maṭha was his setting tunes according to the traditional style known as *gaḍānhāṭi* for those *kīrtanas* that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had composed without stipulating a melody.

From 1925 Vāsudeva Prabhu was Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's personal secretary. He took upon himself the vow of eating only if ordered by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, and as a result sometimes fasted. He once pronounced, "I challenge *māyā* to take me from the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda."

As a *śrutidhara* (one who remembers all he hears), Vāsudeva Prabhu could repeat everything he heard from his *gurudeva.* Often while discoursing, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would speak for some minutes so quickly and animatedly that it was difficult even for his disciples to understand what he was saying. Then he would stop and ask Vāsudeva Prabhu to explain what had been stated, which the percipient Vāsudeva Prabhu would do accurately. And unlike when he would ask other disciples to sing, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī often requested Vāsudeva Prabhu to chant without first specifying the *kīrtana* he wanted to hear, which further suggested that Vāsudeva Prabhu was precisely attuned to the desires of his master.

Vāsudeva Prabhu was highly respected for his erudition, agile intelligence, and renunciation. His word on doctrinal matters was certified by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and therefore honored by all within the mission. By such qualities he became the unofficial leader of the *brahmacārīs,* and his closeness to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura made him even more prominent than most sannyasis.

There was a saying in the Gauḍīya Maṭha: "To learn about *siddhānta* go to Vāsudeva Prabhu, and to learn about *sevā* go to Kuñjadā." Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu was known as *vāṇī-vigraha,* the personification of spiritual instructions, or *siddhānta-vigraha,* the personification of correct philosophical conclusions, and Kuñjadā as *sevā-vigraha,* the personification of service.* Vāsudeva Prabhu was particularly sharp in debate; he could immediately grasp the weak points in an opponent's presentation and refute them.

Vāsudeva Prabhu oversaw the publication department, particularly the production of the *Gauḍīya* and *Harmonist* magazines, and along with his close associate Sundarānanda Prabhu he assisted Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in many literary projects by transcribing, researching, editing, proofreading, and publishing. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura often said, "Sundarānanda is my right hand and the other is Ananta Vāsudeva." Both were widely revered within the Gauḍīya Maṭha, yet because they would not tolerate even slight infringements of standards, some found it difficult to live with them.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura sometimes referred to Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu as his Gaṇeśa, for just as Gaṇeśa was Vyāsadeva's scribe, Vāsudeva Prabhu would record as he dictated. He often asked Vāsudeva to supply references to points he made while dictating, or gave the gist of a topic for Vāsudeva to elaborate on in writing. In this way he composed the commentaries *Gauḍīya-bhāṣya,* on *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata,* and *Śrīmad-bhāgavata-vivṛti.* He often said, "Vāsudeva Prabhu has done many things for me."

Shortly before Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī passed away some disciples asked him, "When you leave this world who will speak your message?" to which he replied, "Vāsudeva Prabhu is intimate with my thoughts. Whatever I have told, whatever I have not told, all will be explained by Vāsudeva. *Rūpa-raghunātha-vāṇī* is to be taught by him."*

Śrīpāda Narahari Sevā-vigraha Prabhu

Born in a respectable *śākta* family of Jessore District, Narahari and most of his family members later turned to Vaiṣṇava dharma. In 1918, just after his elder brother had died, and Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had accepted *sannyāsa,* Narahari left home to surrender his life in service at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha. Noting his versatile abilities, convivial nature, and service attitude, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura deputed Narahari Prabhu as *maṭha-rakṣaka,* a duty he conducted for the rest of his life as a *brahmacārī* at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha. Narahari Prabhu would wake the devotees each morning, personally serve them *mahā-prasāda,* and tend to their individual requirements —all so affectionately that they called him "the mother of Caitanya Maṭha," or more commonly, Naraharidā. He never became angry; even when he had to admonish a devotee, he did it fondly and sweetly. He was always absorbed in various services and hardly slept, and often feelingly chanted *harināma* long into the night.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura awarded Narahari Prabhu the title Sevā-vigraha (personification of service) and called him *ajāta-śatru,* one whose enemy was never born.

Śrīpāda Gopendra-candra Gaṅgopādhyāya

One Gopendra-candra Gaṅgopādhyāya had contracted tuberculosis, for which there was no known antidote, hence spelling certain death. Seeing no other hope, he prayed fervently to Bhagavān to save his life. Then one night in a dream he received Kṛṣṇa-mantra from a figure in *sannyāsa* dress, and upon chanting it, was soon cured. Gopendra Babu was anxious to find the sannyasi who had saved him, yet not until seventeen or eighteen years had elapsed did he find his benefactor, when in 1919 in Khulna he was introduced to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. Because the dream had occurred long before Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī accepted *sannyāsa,* previously Gopendra was unable to trace him out. And since the *tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa* attire that he had seen in the dream was unknown to him or anyone else, he did not know where to begin his search.

Śrīpāda Mukunda Vinoda Bhakti Madhura Prabhu

Śrī Mukunda Vinoda Brahmacārī tended the garden at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha. In his congenitally rough voice, he would immediately order anyone who came within his domain to get to work —"Bring water," "Remove this refuse," and so on. Even big sannyasis were not spared. Notwithstanding, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī awarded him the title Bhakti Madhura (sweetness of devotion), adjudging that this disciple's apparent harshness was expressive of his dedication to Kṛṣṇa's service and thus actually very sweet. And although Mukunda Vinoda's tone was harsh in speech, in *kīrtana* it was proverbially sweet.

Śrīpāda Nityānanda dāsa Vraja-vāsī Sevā-kodaṇḍa

When in 1919 Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī visited the village Naldi, Jessore District, a local resident volunteered to bear the expense for *mahā-prasāda* for his entire party. Later this villager surrendered at Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's lotus feet and became initiated as Nityānanda dāsa Vraja-vāsī, and subsequently was decorated with the title Sevā-kodaṇḍa, which denotes a diligent servant who intuitively knows the *mano-'bhīṣṭa* of his master and how to fulfil it. He arranged for construction in Māyāpur of the Nityānanda Dharmaśālā and a health clinic. He was always seen smiling and never lost his composure or became upset. Although wealthy, he was without false prestige, and took great pleasure in serving *mahā-prasāda* to devotees and pilgrims. Even when elderly, during festivals he tirelessly and with alacrity distributed *mahā-prasāda* all day. He spent the last portion of his life residing in the Maṭhas in Māyāpur and Cāṅpāhāṭi, for some time being the *maṭha-rakṣaka* at the Yogapīṭha, and his desire to pass away in the shelter of Navadvīpa-*dhāma* was fulfilled.

Śrīpāda Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda Prabhu

While visiting Purī in 1918, Subodha Babu, a member of one of the wealthiest families of Dacca and a lecturer at Dacca Women's College, first saw Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī in a *kīrtana* party. But at that time Subodha had no knowledge of the Gauḍīya Maṭha.

Upon seeing a huge *saṅkīrtana* procession headed by the *tridaṇḍa*-bearing Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura traverse the streets of Dacca in 1921, Subodha wanted to know more, so he went to a lecture by Śrīmad Bhakti Pradīpa Tīrtha Mahārāja. Fascinated by the scholarship, perspicuity, and sincerity of Śrīmat Tīrtha Mahārāja and his party, Subodha began attending the daily *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* lectures given by Mahārāja to a small group. Yet the well-read Subodha was not ready to acknowledge this "new" angle on Vaiṣṇava dharma unless convinced that it was actually concordant with *śāstra.*

Subodha once invited Śrīmat Tīrtha Mahārāja to address a gathering of many from the intellectual elite of Dacca, including several caste Goswamis. Mahārāja's speech so pleased the assembly that all profusely complimented him. Even the elderly *gosāñi* whom Subodha considered his guru embraced Śrīmat Tīrtha Mahārāja firmly and happily. But when again called to lecture to the same group, Tīrtha Mahārāja forewarned Subodha that at the previous meeting he had spoken only in a broad manner, not revealing various pertinent points, but this

time he would speak candidly and without restraint. He declared, "Today we will see how much these people actually love truth, or if they are just pretending to be truth-lovers while internally being dedicated to self-gratification."

That day Śrīmat Tīrtha Mahārāja spoke openly against presuming the supreme to be impersonal, accepting demigods and Viṣṇu as equals, and all similar doctrines bandied in the bazar of populism. He went on expounding *bhāgavata-dharma* as the exclusive true dharma for all persons at all places and in all times, and forcefully decried the subreptions of *bhāgavata-dharma* adhered to by virtually all persons of that place and time, to a gradually emptying hall. By the end of his lecture only Subodha remained. Śrīmat Tīrtha Mahārāja had lost the crowd, which was never actually with him, but gained one soul—and that soul would become one of the most brilliant luminaries in the galaxy of the Gauḍīya Maṭha.

Subodha's loyalty to his old mentors and beliefs had been jolted by seeing all those whom he thought to be friends and well-wishers melt away one by one, their veneer of piety exposed as erroneous, self-serving, and smarmy by Śrīmat Tīrtha Mahārāja's straightforward unembellished presentation. Gradually appreciating that throughout his life he had been beguiled, he heard a voice from within: "Be patient and listen to this forthright oration. Let your mind enter into what should be heard. Don't follow the masses like a foolish sheep."

Then Subodha cerebrated, "Today's extraordinary lecturer is either completely mad or speaking fearlessly from a platform beyond all mundane concepts, from the level of incomparable supreme truth. If the latter, then my patrons, whom I regarded as reliable authorities and spiritual guides, by their inability to endure today's exposure of cheating religion have proved themselves subscribers to it. Should I measure reality by its own standard, as was propounded today? Or reject it out of small-minded party spirit and petty dogmatism? If I can be convinced that what was stated today is indeed fully consistent with the conclusions of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and Śrīman Mahāprabhu, then I will certainly recognize it as bona fide. With *praṇipāta* (submissiveness) and *paripraśna* (relevant inquiry), while performing *sevā* and praying for the mercy of the Lord, I will for as long as required listen patiently and try to understand this philosophy until all my doubts are cleared.* In the name of establishing worldly comity, whatever most persons conceive as correct or wrong, let that be. Now I perceive that so many impostors who are promoted as realized souls, gurus, avatars, or whatever, are simply dancing on the public stage as per the desires of their purported followers. Now I want the truth and no further deception."

Subodha had deep faith in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and wanted to comprehend the Gauḍīya Maṭha position on the basis of these *śāstras,* without accepting anything blindly. So over the next month he spent much time questioning Śrīmat Tīrtha Mahārāja and scrutinizing the replies. He also attended Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's lectures, listening carefully and taking notes. Whenever the opportunity arose he interrogated Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura as he had Śrīmat Tīrtha Mahārāja, and was gratified to hear the same lucid philosophy from both guru and disciple. And by daily joining the Gauḍīya Maṭha *saṅkīrtana*

party in the streets of Dacca, he publicly declared his changed allegiance.

When Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura left Dacca for Mymensingh, Subodha followed him, and from there to Māyāpur, where Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura immediately awarded him *harināma* and *dīkṣā,* with the name Śrī Sundarānanda dāsa Adhikārī. That afternoon a telegram arrived from Dacca entreating that he not be initiated, lest his practical life be disrupted. Although sent by a prominent citizen of Dacca who was well known both to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and Sundarānanda, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura deemed that plea meaningless and did not even consider it. He immediately had Sundarānanda Prabhu accompany a squad of preachers to a remote rural area where he would not be found, and after some days sent him to the Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha for requisite training.

Sundarānanda later relocated back to Dacca and was appointed *maṭha-rakṣaka* of the Mādhva Gauḍīya Maṭha situated there. Although a *gṛhastha,* thereafter Sundarānanda resided at the Maṭha and focused on literary service, being decorated by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura with the title Vidyāvinoda (one whose pleasure is knowledge). In 1923 he was appointed assistant editor of the *Gauḍīya,* and before long was made editor in chief. Often he was referred to in Gauḍīya Maṭha publications as simply "the *Gauḍīya* editor."

Whereas Vāsudeva Prabhu was particularly nimble in debate, Sundarānanda Prabhu's prehensility was better suited for analyzing and confuting *apa-siddhāntas* through prepared speeches, essays, and other written formats. He became the most profuse and respected writer among the disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī—his fecundity nourished by the torrents of transcendental thought constantly flowing from Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura—with a unique style that was at once incisive, erudite, thorough, captivating, and convincing. Sundarānanda Prabhu was exempted from the rule restricting Gauḍīya Maṭha devotees to read only works of accepted *ācāryas,* for his service of identifying, analyzing, and exposing in print diverse misconceptions, whether hatched from within the ranks of ostensible Vaiṣṇavas or from philosophical enemies without, required that he read widely, including matter composed by nondevotees and pseudo-devotees. He would scan newspapers, magazines, and newly published books, and his subsequent reviews in the *Gauḍīya* became legendary, as they ripped apart, from a more informed and perceptive platform of scholarship, statements and theses contrary to *siddhānta.* Nevertheless, Sundarānanda Prabhu's thoroughness in research, his compelling presentations, and his sheer volume of work earned him esteem even within the community of secular academics whom he rigidly opposed, wherein his name was oft-quoted and respected.

Among his invaluable literary achievements were the editing and publishing in the *Gauḍīya* of many of his guru-*mahārāja's* lectures, essays, interlocutions, and letters, selections of which he later gathered and produced in a series of booklets treasured by the followers of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī even today.[*]

During Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's presence the mission published several books written by Sundarānanda Prabhu (the bulk of which first appeared as serial features in the *Gauḍīya*), including:

Dvādaśa Ālvār (Twelve Ālvārs)

Gauḍīya Gaurava (Gauḍīya dignity)

Gauḍīya Sāhitya (Gauḍīya literature)

Gīti Sāhitye Śrī Bhaktivinoda ([the place, or contribution, of] Śrī Bhaktivinoda in literature concerning song)

Gosvāmī Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa [biographical]

Parama Guru Śrī Gaura Kiśora [biographical]

Śrī Bhuvaneśvara [about Bhubaneswar]

Śrī Caitanyera Prema (Śrī Caitanya's devotional love)

Śrī Vraja-maṇḍala Parikramā

Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda [biographical]

Vaiṣṇava Sāhitye Viraha Tattva (The principle of emotional separation within Vaiṣṇava literature);

and also *Sarasvatī Jayaśrī* [biographical] and *Sarasvatī Saṁlāpa* (Conversations with Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura), both of which were compiled and edited by Sundarānanda Prabhu.[6]

On Gaura-*jayantī* 1936, seven days after commencing the writing of *Śrī Caitanyadeva,* Sundarānanda Prabhu presented it to his guru-*mahārāja* and to Śrī Caitanya-deva. As stated in the preamble, *Śrī Caitanyadeva* was composed to edify persons who consulted mundane academic sources for gaining knowledge of Lord Caitanya, against the logic of *kāmārera dokāne dadhi pāoyā yāya nā:* "Yogurt is not available in a blacksmith's shop."[*]

After Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's departure, Sundarānanda Prabhu produced several more books, including one that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had repeatedly ordered him to compile: *Śrī Bhaktivinoda-vāṇī-vaibhava,* a selection of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's illuminations on a wide range of essential devotional topics. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had also ordered Sundarānanda Prabhu to write on the character and activities of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī, and himself (Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī); Sundarānanda Prabhu compiled *Sarasvatī Jayaśrī* before Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's departure, and booklets on Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī shortly thereafter.

Sundarānanda Prabhu was also a sonorous orator. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura instructed him to give a series of *Bhagavad-gītā* lectures in colleges in Dacca (digests of those lectures also

appeared in the *Gauḍīya*), and often invited him as a co-speaker at public meetings. Once Sundarānanda Prabhu delivered a lecture on Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, which Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura appreciated so much that he blessed him, "May you not attain liberation until you have spoken thus to at least one lakh of people; and even after liberation you should continue speaking like that. Know that Kṛṣṇa-*kīrtana* is your *nitya-dharma* (eternal function)."[†]

Śrīpāda Haripada Vidyāratna and Others

Among the many scholarly *gṛhastha* disciples of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, some of the most prominent were Paṇḍita Śrī-yukta Nandalāla Vidyāsāgara; Ācārya Paṇḍita Śrī-yukta Navīna Kṛṣṇa Vidyālaṅkāra; Professor Śrī-yukta Jadubara dāsādhikārī Sampradāya-vaibhava Ācārya, M.A., B.L.; and Paṇḍita Śrī-yukta Haripada Vidyāratna Kavi-bhūṣaṇa, M.A., B.L., principal of the Parā-vidyā-pīṭha. Śrī Haripada Vidyāratna was an early follower of Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī and co-editor of the *Gauḍīya.* He was a reputed singer adept in the theory, history, and intricacies of Gauḍīya music. These four regularly lectured at Gauḍīya Maṭha functions and were considered equally or even more knowledgeable than several of the sannyasis.

Śrīpāda Navīna Kṛṣṇa Vidyālaṅkāra

Śrīpāda Navīna Kṛṣṇa dāsa was a householder who lived as a *maṭha-vāsī.* Although little educated when he first came to the sanctuary of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's lotus feet, he later became known among his godbrothers as a *paṇḍita* and was suitably decorated by his guru-*mahārāja* with the title Vidyālaṅkāra (ornamented with knowledge). He was Sundarānanda Prabhu's right-hand man in literary work. One of his achievements was preparing an index for the issues of the eighth to fourteenth years of the *Gauḍīya.*

Śrīpāda Aprākṛta Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī and Śrīpāda Atīndriya Prabhu

One sweltering summer day, two senior railway functionaries who were posted in Dhanbad arrived at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha. Rising from his seat under the jackfruit tree, Vinoda Bihārī Prabhu welcomed them and arranged that they bathe, honor *mahā-prasāda,* and receive *darśana* of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. The two men were so impressed that each volunteered to send five rupees per month to the struggling Maṭha, and thenceforward visited regularly.

When Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura went to Dhanbad in 1921, he stayed in the residence of one of them, Śrī Atula-candra Bandhopādhyāya. Soon thereafter Atula left his home and family to fully surrender his life in service to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his mission. The *maṭha-vāsīs* were perturbed by this, as they felt dependent on his monthly donation and could not foresee managing without it. Atula Babu told them not to worry.

Atula, a non-practicing (i.e., non-initiating) Nityānanda-*vaṁśa* caste Goswami, was soon given *harināma* and *dīkṣā,* with the name Aprākṛta Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī. By designating him as

Aprākṛta, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura underlined that he was now a real *gosvāmī,* no longer in name only. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura also dubbed him Nityānanda-vaṁśāvataṁsa (ornament of the Nityānanda-*vaṁśa*) and even though he had not formally taken *sannyāsa,* within the Gauḍīya Maṭha he was generally known as Gosvāmī Mahārāja, or more formally as Aprākṛta Prabhu or Bhakti Sāraṅga Prabhu. He soon began soliciting donations from pious merchants, and by his efforts truckloads of grains, vegetables, and other commodities began arriving at the Maṭha.

Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī was a dynamic preacher with tremendous presence and aplomb. His collection techniques were legendary, as he sometimes employed tricks and sometimes instilled fear in potential donors. He could burst in unknown and unannounced on a cynic and elicit a major donation. He was the driving force behind the securing of several plots of land for establishing Maṭhas in various places. For some time Śrīmad B.P. Tīrtha and he regularly traveled together as a powerful preaching duo. Śrī Haripada Vidyāratna and he were the first co-editors of the weekly *Gauḍīya,* and in 1329 (Bengali year) Gosvāmī Mahārāja was appointed the *Gauḍīya-sampādaka-saṅgha sabhāpati,* chairman of the *Gauḍīya* editorial board.

In October 1936 Gosvāmī Mahārāja was sent to England, being designated Missionary in Charge of Preaching in Europe and America. At the sendoff ceremony in Calcutta, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī praised him as qualified, learned, expert in practical activities, of respectable lineage, and above all, seriously endeavoring in devotional service.

After Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's deparure, Gosvāmī Mahārāja took *sannyāsa,* with the name Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī Mahārāja.

Atula Kṛṣṇa Datta, the other gentleman who had accompanied Atula-candra on their first visit to the Maṭha, was initiated on the same day as Aprākṛta Prabhu, receiving the name Atīndriya dāsa, and later decorated with the title Bhakti Guṇākāra. He pleased Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura by compiling the well-known *Gauḍīya Kaṇṭhahāra,* an anthology of important verses from various *śāstras*.[*]

Śrīpāda Uddharaṇa Prabhu

Śrīpāda Uddharaṇa Prabhu was known as the *bhāṇḍāri* (storekeeper) of Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha. His sole service was to see that everyone receive *prasāda.* With innumerable devotees and guests constantly coming and going, often unannounced and some following special diets due to health, it was a full-time service to replenish stocks and supplies and coordinate cooks and cooking. It wasn't easy to keep everyone satisfied, yet Uddharaṇa Prabhu was expert and ready to serve devotees at any time of day or night, maintaining a sweet temperament even if others became upset with him. His service was best appreciated on the rare occasions when he was absent from Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha—which inevitably fell into culinary chaos.

Śrīpāda Śarat-candra Bandhopādhyāya and Daughters

When visiting Dacca in 1922 Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura lectured in the home of Śarat-candra Bandhopādhyāya, who by hearing that soothing Hari-*kathā* overcame the lamentation caused by the recent death of his son. He then sought shelter at Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's lotus feet and was granted *dīkṣā,* and some time later his two daughters—Aparṇā, a young widowed mother of a daughter, and Suṣamā—also took *dīkṣā.*

Living with her parents and following strict vows of asceticism as enjoined for widows, Aparṇā harnessed her considerable literary flair in regularly composing devotional articles and poems for the *Gauḍīya.* Her poems were especially appreciated for their sweet, visceral style. After Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's departure, Aparṇā devī rendered Bengali poetry translations of the collections of Sanskrit prayers titled *Stava-mālā,* by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, and *Stavāvalī,* by Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī.

Śrīpāda Ananta Viśvambhara Prabhu

When a twenty-four-year-old wrestling champion joined the Gauḍīya Maṭha in 1922, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura assigned Śrī Avidyā-haraṇa dāsa Adhikārī to teach him Gauḍīya *siddhānta.* Upon later being initiated, the wrestler was named Śrī Ananta Viśvambhara Brahmacārī.

Even after joining the Maṭha, disregarding his guru-*mahārāja's* disapproval Ananta Viśvambhara engaged daily in wrestling practice with outside fighters. At midday he would consume two *seras* of rice, enough to feed six to eight average Bengalis.[*] Once Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura happened to appear during *prasāda* distribution, and seeing that Ananta was staring sorrowfully at his plate, told the server, "He needs more. Give him as much as he wants."

Ananta Viśvambhara Prabhu was adept at collecting funds and maintained a rapport with the s*uvarṇa-vaṇik* (gold merchant) community of Calcutta. But he opened a private account at the Beadon Street post office with an initial deposit of thirteen thousand rupees that he had illicitly kept from donations entrusted to him.[†] When he later fell ill, he was sent home by Kuñjadā with the advice, "Come back only when you have fully recovered, because you won't be properly cared for here."

While at home, Ananta regularly received the *Gauḍīya,* and one week the headline "Vraje Calo" (Go to Vraja) caught his attention.[7] The article announced that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was organizing a spectacular Vraja-maṇḍala Parikramā for thousands of participants, without mentioning that the mission was far short of the huge finances required for such an expedition.

When after regaining his health Ananta returned to the Maṭha, Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu, who as a postal clerk knew of Ananta's account, approached him and cajoled him, "Now that Guru-mahārāja is having difficulty arranging this Parikramā for want of resources, could you please donate your money?" Ananta refused.

Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu reported this to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, who then personally requested Ananta to relinquish the money—yet to no avail. Finally Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī asked Vinoda Bihārī Brahmacārī to coax his close friend Ananta. Vinoda Bihārī sat Ananta next to him, gave him sweets, patted him on the back, and told him that because Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was himself asking for the money, he should give it. He assured Ananta that the entire amount would somehow be returned to him. Thus under pressure from all sides, Ananta finally agreed and gave the money when the Parikramā arrived at Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī publicly thanked him, saying, "He has helped with the financial needs of this Parikramā in a way that no one else, not even any of the big sannyasis, could do."

One day during the rainy season in Māyāpur, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was walking on Bhakti Saraṇī while it was still under construction. Over a ditch was a downward-sloping fragile bridge of bamboo poles lashed together with twine.[*] As Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura crossed, the bridge was shaking, and just before reaching the other side he slipped. But waiting in front of him on solid ground was Ananta Viśvambhara Prabhu, who caught his guru in a firm embrace and saved him from falling.[†] Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura then blessed him, "As you have saved me from this danger today, I bless you that Śrīman Mahāprabhu will save you from all calamities."

At Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was once in his room facing the sea while a pleasant breeze was wafting in. Noticing that only one of the two wooden shutters was open, Ananta suggested, "If you fully open the window, extra air will come in and it will be more pleasing." Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī replied, "Unnecessary comfort and bodily enjoyment will be detrimental to my *bhajana*." Ananta Viśvambhara anyway opened the shutter, but as he left he saw that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had closed it again to halfway, to let in just a little air and light.

Much later, after Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's disappearance, Ananta Viśvambhara Prabhu was awarded *sannyāsa,* with the name Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Bardhaka Sāgara Mahārāja.

Śrīpāda Praṇavānanda Pratna-vidyālaṅkāra Prabhu

Gaṅgānandapur, a village of Jessore, was home to many educated and cultured people, including Śrī Tāriṇī Caraṇa Cakravartī, a traditional although indigent *brāhmaṇa.* His wife was much devoted to worshiping at a local Śiva temple. After losing a daughter and son in their early childhood, she was informed in a dream that she would give birth to two sons. The first was born in 1898. A custom meant to invoke protection of an infant was to sell him to a known person for a small sum, after which he was re-purchased by the parents for another token amount. Accordingly, this infant was bought for three cowries, and thus acquired the name Tin Kaḍi, or Tinu for short.[*] However, upon observing the lad's developing pleasure in music and song, his father gave him the more formal appellative Pramoda Bhūṣaṇa (ornamented with delight)."

Śrī Tāriṇī Caraṇa dutifully imparted to Pramoda the practices and standoffishness of his caste.

Yet in his childhood Pramoda started frequenting the other side of the village to associate with Vaiṣṇavas residing there. He would sneak out from home to join their nocturnal *kīrtanas,* often returning just before sunup. His mother would leave the door open and help hide his surreptitious *bhakti* from his father, who was certain to disapprove. Prominent among the Vaiṣṇavas was Śrī Bhakti Ratna Ṭhākura, who considered himself a disciple of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda despite being his godbrother, both having been initiated by Śrī Bipina Bihārī Goswami. Pramoda would converse for hours with Bhakti Ratna Ṭhākura, who urged him to study Gauḍīya literature and worship his (Bhakti Ratna Ṭhākura's) small deity of Madana-mohana. Receiving Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's writings from Bhakti Ratna Ṭhākura, Pramoda learned from them the utter worthlessness of caste prestige.

By hearing from Śrī Bhakti Ratna Ṭhākura of the exalted qualities of Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī, within his heart Pramoda accepted Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī as his *gurudeva* and resolved to meet him.

In 1915 Bhakti Ratna Ṭhākura heard of the imminent departure of Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī and advised Pramoda to go for his *darśana* ere it be too late. Yet Pramoda arrived in Navadvīpa the day after Bābājī Mahārāja's departure. The following day, he crossed the river to Māyāpur for his first *darśana* of Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī.

Pramoda continued his studies at Calcutta University, sometimes visiting Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī at Vrajapattana. Burdened by having to maintain his family, after obtaining a B.Sc. he reluctantly forswore further education and landed a well-paying job in the Calcutta Port Commission. His financial situation now ameliorated, he secured private lodging, brought his mother and younger sister to live with him, and subscribed to the seriately published *Gauḍīya* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Every day after work Pramoda would return briefly to his residence then hasten to the Gauḍīya Maṭha. One evening as he was putting on his shoes to depart for the Maṭha he suddenly felt a deathly twinge shoot up from his toe. Removing his shoe, he saw the scorpion that had bitten him, and blood blackish from venom exuding from the wound. Only two days before, a neighbor had died from scorpion bite. Yet Pramoda confidently assured his weeping mother that he was alright, and eagerly left to hear Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's lecture. Although the pain continued throughout the evening and night, Pramoda cared little for it, being enrapt in newfound love for the great soul who had just saved him from the far worse poison of worldly existence.

While giving Pramoda both *harināma* and *dīkṣā* on Janmāṣṭamī in 1923 at Ultadingi Junction Road, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī told him, “You are called Pramoda Bhūṣaṇa, but since it is not befitting to be decorated with material delights, I am giving you the name Praṇavānanda Brahmacārī.”

Spending more and more time at the Maṭha and less and less in his office, Praṇavānanda Prabhu was soon fired from his job and happily moved into the Maṭha, where he was engaged

in his natural propensity for literary work. With the launching of the *Nadia Prakash* in 1926 he was made a co-editor, in which capacity he published abstracts of his guru-*mahārāja's* daily lectures, articles by godbrothers and other contemporaries, and also a significant number of his own original compositions. He often stayed up all night checking and rechecking the galley proofs to fulfil Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's desire that the text be wholly free of glitches. From 1930 he served on the *Gauḍīya* editorial board.

Always mindful of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's instruction that he "not give up the service of the pen," Praṇavānanda Prabhu took pen and paper wherever he went and was ever alert to jot down Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's Hari-*kathā,* both formal and informal. One time at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha Praṇavānanda noticed his guru-*mahārāja* shooing pigeons from the temple, lest they dirty it. When Praṇavānanda darted up, eager to take dictation, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura told him, "I know you are working very hard and taking great trouble upon yourself. But what can I do? You cannot have me at any time you like. You have to write when I am able to dictate"—which he then did while walking up and down, with Praṇavānanda at his side taking notes. Praṇavānanda Prabhu was also a leading researcher for the indexes of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's editions of *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* and composed the summaries featured at the beginning of each chapter of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

In recognition of his having written under his *pūrvāśrama* name a series of articles in the *Gauḍīya* demolishing mundane academic views on Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura awarded Praṇavānanda Prabhu the title Pratna-vidyālaṅkāra (ornamented with ancient knowledge).[*] Then in 1933 he was further decorated with the title Upadeśaka, and in 1934 Mahopadeśaka. In the *āśīrvāda-patra* given along with one of these titles, Praṇavānanda Prabhu was praised by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura: "He has guru-*bhakti,* is learned, has a warm heart, keen intelligence, and spotless character, and is ever absorbed in *saṅkīrtana,* preaching, and publishing the *Gauḍīya.*" Praṇavānanda Prabhu was respected for always being equable and sober, never brash or headstrong. He was unattached to good clothing or whether he had sufficient eatables. Although highly qualified, he shunned recognition.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī affectionately called Praṇavānanda "Pronob" (the Bengali pronunciation of Praṇava). While overseeing the serving of *mahā-prasāda* to his disciples, he would josh that since Pronob was from Jessore he should be given plenty of date molasses.[†] And whenever a letter came from Pronob's family Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would tease, "Pronob's respected mother has sent him a letter. I'm so sad to think how his poor mother is lamenting his absence. Pronob must similarly be pining for her." He sometimes joked that Praṇavānanda was "always calling 'Mā!'"[*]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had directed Praṇavānanda Prabhu to prepare for *sannyāsa,* and was slated to confer it upon him in July 1933. Yet shortly before the scheduled date, Praṇavānanda Prabhu reneged, claiming that he was attached to his mother and too often thinking of her. In

April 1935 in Gayā, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura again suggested that Praṇavānanda take *sannyāsa.* But somehow that never transpired during Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's presence.

Praṇavānanda Prabhu was among the several *brahmacārīs* assigned by Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu to serve their guru-*mahārāja* during the final days before his passing away. One day while Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was sitting alone in his room, Praṇavānanda Prabhu entered, offered *daṇḍavat,* and clasping his *gurudeva's* lotus feet to his chest, tearfully pleaded, "Prabhupāda, I am your most ignorant and incompetent son. I have no good qualities. I have committed so many offenses at your lotus feet. Please forgive me and grant your mercy. Give me shelter at your lotus feet. Without your mercy I have no hope." Then his voice became choked with emotion. Hearing this, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura also wept.

After Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's departure, Praṇavānanda Prabhu accepted *sannyāsa,* with the name Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Pramoda Purī Mahārāja.

Śrīpāda Bhāgavata-janānanda Prabhu

Touring Midnapore District in 1924, preachers headed by Śrīmad Bhakti Viveka Bhāratī Mahārāja and Śrīpāda Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī urged the crowds attending their programs to avail of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's association at the imminent annual festival of Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha in Purī. Śrī Bhavānī-caraṇa Pāhāḍī, son of the local *brāhmaṇa* zamindar, became so charmed by these devotees' Hari-*kathā* that notwithstanding his high birth, wealthy background, youthful health and beauty, intelligence, and good education—usually causes of pride and thus obstacles to Hari-*bhakti*—he rushed to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's lotus feet to surrender. After being initiated as Śrī Bhāgavata-janānanda dāsa Brahmacārī, he served in the Śrī Caitanya Maṭha preaching department, and by his enthusiasm and affectionate nature he soon became beloved by his guru-*mahārāja.*

Seven days before the 1925 Navadvīpa-dhāma Parikramā began, an article by Bhāgavata-janānanda Prabhu titled *Bandhura Kṛtya* (A friend's duty) was featured anonymously in the *Gauḍīya.*[8] On the very day that he completed the Parikramā, after arriving at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, he departed in the manner of a liberated yogi. Although Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would become aggrieved whenever a disciple expired, he was particularly affected by the sudden departure of this pure-hearted boy. It was only after Bhāgavata-janānanda Prabhu's passing that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī first read *Bandhura Kṛtya.* Moved to tears, he declared, "Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura came in another form, but I could not recognize him."

Before his passing Bhāgavata-janānanda Prabhu had donated a sizeable portion of his ancestral property to the Gauḍīya Maṭha, desiring that a branch be established there. Accordingly, on the first anniversary of Bhāgavata-janānanda Prabhu's departure, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī journeyed to that beloved disciple's home village, held an elegiac festival honoring his *tirobhāva-tithi,* and founded the Śrī Bhāgavata-janānanda Maṭha. On both days that he spent there he lectured morning and evening on the verse:

mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave
svalpa-puṇyavatāṁ rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate

O King, persons of meager piety do not develop faith in *mahā-prasāda,* Govinda, the holy name, or Vaiṣṇavas.[9]

In one session for each topic, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura elaborated that persons lacking piety do not have faith in *mahā-prasāda,* Govinda, the holy name, or Vaiṣṇavas.

Śrīpāda Nārāyaṇa dāsa Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu

Born in 1884 into a reputed *brāhmaṇa* family of the village Korakdi, Faridpur District, East Bengal, Śrī Nishi Kanta (N.K.) Sanyal was a reputed history professor at the prestigious Ravenshaw College in Cuttack.[*] After meeting Śrīmad B.P. Tīrtha in the early 1920s, he traveled to Calcutta to spend a week of his summer vacation at the Ultadingi Road Maṭha. Although Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was not present, Professor Sanyal, who was versed in both Eastern and Western philosophy, spent the whole week discussing intently with Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu. After his innumerable vollies of arguments and counterarguments had been shot down one by one, Professor Sanyal was convinced that he had to dedicate his life there. Yet it was not until 1925 that he formally accepted *harināma,* and simultaneously *dīkṣā,* receiving the name Śrī Nārāyaṇa dāsa Adhikārī. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura later honored him with the title Bhakti Sudhākara.[*] His godbrothers often informally yet respectfully referred to him as Professor Babu.

Śrī Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu set a unique model of renunciation within the *gṛhastha-āśrama*. Every month he would send his full salary of eight hundred rupees to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, who made an arrangement to return two hundred to Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu's wife for minimal family maintenance. Even though teaching youth of the modernized elite, Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu fully embraced Vaiṣṇava principles without compromising—attending college with *tulasī* neckbeads and *tilaka* clearly visible and observing Cātur-māsya, including not shaving or paring nails. After college hours he would go to Saccidānanda Maṭha, participate in temple programs and perform various services, and then chant *japa* before returning home late at night. His several requests to leave his job and family to perform full-time service within the Maṭha inevitably elicited the reply from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī "You are already giving yourself fully to Kṛṣṇa, so why change anything?"

Although at first his family members were as staunchly opposed to *śuddha-bhakti* as he was committed to it, eventually they all joined him in adopting full-fledged allegiance to Hari-*bhakti.* Upon his sons' becoming initiated, he ceased treating them as subordinate children and instead offered them respect as godbrothers. One day his wife came to the Saccidānanda Maṭha and presented all her ornaments to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, saying, "Whom these are meant for is here, so they too should be here."[†]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī praised this singular disciple:

> Even though he is a *gṛhastha,* Professor Sanyal is a true *tridaṇḍī,* because *tridaṇḍī* means one who gives everything to Kṛṣṇa—mind, body, and words. Whether *brahmacārī,* sannyasi, or *gṛhastha,* everyone should become a *tridaṇḍī,* "one who engages in unalloyed devotional service." And the way to give everything to Kṛṣṇa is to deliver Hari-*kathā.* Professor Sanyal has entirely surrendered himself to his guru. He considers that any moment of his life not spent in serving Hari-guru-Vaiṣṇavas is completely squandered, never to be regained.[10]

By Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu's efforts many people took to and became fixed in *śuddha-bhakti.* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī said of him, "Although a householder, he is the guru of sannyasis; he is a *nirdhūta* (thoroughly purified) Vaiṣṇava."

As the de facto editor of and chief contributor to the *Harmonist,* Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu occupied a uniquely prestigious position among his godbrothers. Competent both in philosophical understanding and complex English expression, and his heart one with his *gurudeva's,* he was practically the alter ego of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's *kīrtana* as expressed in English; thus Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura sometimes published his own articles under the name Prof. Nishi Kant Sanyal, M.A., and vice versa.[*] Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu's forte, which formed the basis of many of his *Harmonist* articles, was replying to the empiricist position that religion is an unverifiable ideology, and to specific accusations against Vaiṣṇava dharma and the personage of Śrī Caitanya. With penetratingly logical refutations, Professor Sanyal repeatedly demonstrated the inadequacy of empiric methods for examining the transcendental, while also establishing the reasonableness of accepting that the only possible means for acquiring transcendental knowledge is to humbly approach and be enlightened by persons in contact with the transcendental reality.

At one point Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura undertook translation of *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* into English, but soon delegated the work to Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu. The English verse rendition, and that of *Śaraṇāgati*, also translated by Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu, were featured seriately in the *Harmonist.* Another important project entrusted to him was compilation of the definitive book *Sree Krishna Chaitanya.* And he was commisioned to write lectures for Śrīmad Bon Mahārāja to deliver in England. He was a major contributor of Bengali articles to the *Gauḍīya* and *Nadia Prakash* and wrote some Oriya articles for the *Paramārthī.*

Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu was almost fanatically attached to his guru. In a Vyāsa-*pūjā* address he stated, "I don't want Kṛṣṇa, yet I worship Him because you say I need Him." And when a grammatical mistake was detected in Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's English dictation, Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu declared that the English language should be revised accordingly.

Although legendary for lacerating nondevotional misconceptions, Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu was generally docile and effacing in dealings with senior Vaiṣṇavas. On the night after the procession bringing the deities from Ultadingi Road to the new Maṭha at Bāg-bazar, the devotees honored *mahā-prasāda* very late and did not retire until after midnight. When Śrīmat Śrīdhara Mahārāja awoke the next morning, Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu spoke to him in a

labored whisper from the adjacent bed, “Last night I felt totally drained. I thought I was dying. I was going to rouse you, but considered, ‘Why should I disturb a Vaiṣṇava? He is tired, so let me wait. After delaying awhile I felt I had gained some strength, so I did not bother you. Yet now again I am very weak.’ Śrīmat Śrīdhara Mahārāja at once informed their guru-*mahārāja* that Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu had risked dying rather than inconveniencing a godbrother. Knowing that Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu was not one to unnecessarily complain, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura immediately arranged for a doctor.*

Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu was also present when a disciple who had returned from Europe temerariously accosted Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, opining that straightforward preaching would not be effective in the West—better to use an indirect approach. “What can you know of England while remaining here?” he conjectured. “From India you cannot properly estimate the level of civilization existing in London. Those people are so brave, learned, and cultured that to preach there we must be trained in a different way.” Taken aback, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura mildly replied, “This is not our way of thinking. Although my *gurudeva* was apparently uncultured and illiterate, all trappings of aritocracy, such as scholarship and wealth, were manifest in his toenail.” But Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu, who had drafted speeches to be delivered by that godbrother in Europe, furiously berated him: “You fool! How are you so insolent to talk in such a boisterous manner? You have forgotten how to behave toward our divine master! Do you think yourself so great that you know everything? During all these years what did you learn here? You don't know anything! Knowledge gained by experience is temporary and thus has no value!”

When Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu approached Śrī Jānakīnātha Bose for a fixed monthly contribution, Jānakīnātha Babu asked, “How much are you giving? I will give double.” Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu uttered, “Six hundred rupees a month.” Jānakīnātha Babu would never have expected that a middle-class professor would give so much, yet he kept his word and began donating twelve hundred rupees per month.

Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu also paid for Saṁvidānanda Prabhu to travel to London to compile his Ph.D. thesis on Śrī Caitanya's doctrine.* This gesture pleased Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, but other Gauḍīya Maṭha members criticized that Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu was not keeping enough for himself, so why should his earnings be given for this? Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu responded, “I have sacrificed everything for my guru-*mahārāja*. He may take my money and do as he likes. Don't disturb him with your complaints.”

Śrīpāda Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu often suffered from excruciating migraines. He would challenge them, “Let us see if you can obstruct my service to Hari-guru-Vaiṣṇavas.” Ignoring those headaches, he would continue with service, and eventually the pain would abate.

Śrīpāda Jagabandhu Bhakti Rañjana

Śrī Jagabandhu Datta was born in the village of Banaripara, Barisal District, East Bengal, in the Bengali year 1278 (1872–73 A.D.).† When he was fourteen, a flurry of wind entered his ear

and blew away much of his sense of hearing, thus ending his schooling. At age sixteen he opened a tiny grocery shop in his village, yet gradually the hardships of running it alone, compounded by his hearing defect, twice impelled him to attempt suicide by ingesting opium. On both occasions, with considerable endeavor and difficulty, doctors managed to save him.

Upset that his relatives would not let him die, Jagabandhu fled home and headed for Calcutta with merely fourteen rupees. On arrival, the prospects of the big city afforded him renewed hope, although his first days there were spent living on a footpath, drinking Gaṅgā water, and chewing dried chickpeas purchased with the few paise he was able to scrape together. By patient hard work and utilization of his sharp business intelligence, eventually he was able to start a company producing "JBD Brand" ink, which soon made him rich and famous. Desiring to reside by and daily bathe in the Gaṅgā, in 1322 he acquired a piece of land adjacent to the river and there constructed a palatial homestead, replete with adjoining gardens.

In 1326 while visiting his native village to attend a brother's death ceremony, he broke a leg, which became so seriously infected that doctors advised amputating it. Not desiring amputation yet fearing for his life, Jagabandhu prayed intensely to Bhagavān, and within a few days he unexpectedly came in contact with two Gauḍīya Maṭha devotees. A committed *śākta* and worshiper of many gods, Jagabandhu was appalled at the condition of popular Vaiṣṇavism and, having been cheated by several hypothetical Vaiṣṇavas, had developed a deep aversion toward the Vaiṣṇava cult. Yet upon hearing from the Gauḍīya Maṭha devotees the *bhakti-siddhānta* as expounded by the *ācārya* of that name, and upon reading the books of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura given by them, he began to appreciate genuine Vaiṣṇava dharma as elevated and pure, and when out of danger occasionally visited the Gauḍīya Maṭha at Ultadingi.

During such visits Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu would personally escort and give special treatment to Jagabandhu, who after about three years revealed to him, "I'm a businessman doing honest trade; but knowing the world to be full of fleecers I don't accept anything very easily. It's obvious to me that most supposed gurus of our day are simply hoaxers; hence I had lost all faith in Vaiṣṇava dharma. I have been observing your men carefully to see if they are the same type, and now I'm convinced that their sincerity, probity, guru-*bhakti,* adherence to regulative principles, and enthusiastic dedication to preaching are all for real."

In 1926 (A.D.), Jagabandhu was invited by Gauḍīya Maṭha devotees to attend Ratha-yātrā in Purī and the contemporaneous annual festival of the Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha. Seeing Maharaja Sir Maṇīndra-candra Nandī listening to Hari-*kathā* from Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura at Puruṣottama Maṭha, Jagabandhu also became inspired to hear in earnest. Kuñjadā then introduced Jagabandhu and his two wives to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who respectfully greeted them and spoke at length about the practice and propagation of pure devotion according to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's principles. Jagabandhu expressed his profound satisfaction, declaring that never before had he heard such a novel yet philosophically sound exposition of spiritual truths.

Astonished and impressed upon observing the Gauḍīya Maṭha devotees' constant engagement in Hari-*kathā*-*kīrtana*—even while bathing, eating, or going for evacuation—and their *yukta*-

vairāgya and sincerity, he realized that they were far better than the hangers-on surrounding Maharaja Nandī. After a few more days of hearing Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, Jagabandhu felt such mental and even physical relief that he requested to be accepted as a disciple. Upon returning to Calcutta he was awarded *harināma* and the name Jagabandhu dāsa Adhikārī. Later he was decorated with the titles Bhakti Rañjana (one who delights in devotion) and Śreṣṭhyārya (best of the noble). Now a staunch Vaiṣṇava, he forswore solid food and ate just once daily, taking only milk, roots, and fruit, and constantly chanted the holy names until nightfall. Eager to share his good fortune, Jagabandhu Prabhu arranged that his homeland be inundated with the Kṛṣṇa-*kīrtana* of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and thirty-six accompanying Gauḍīya Maṭha devotees.

Jagabandhu Prabhu respected Kuñjadā on a level similar to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's. Having no sons to inherit his wealth, and desiring to offer his lifetime earnings to a project of significant and lasting social benefit, he asked Kuñjadā's blessing to perform some specific service appropriate to his capabilities. The need to upgrade from the outgrown facility at Ultadingi Junction Road being obvious to all, Kuñjadā suggested that Jagabandhu bestow a custom-built temple in style commensurate with the now-established reputation of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, as a permanent headquarters for the mission in Calcutta. When Jagabandhu mooted this proposal to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, who knew that he had the means to do something wonderful, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī directed him to erect a temple wherefrom Gaurasundara's message could be broadcast throughout the globe. Accordingly, Jagabandhu Prabhu secured a site close to his own home in Bāg-bazar with the intention that he and his family members would regularly associate with, serve, and hear from the *maṭha-vāsīs.* He sacrificed most of his vast fortune to fully fund the construction thereon of a palatial marble temple with an adjoining *kīrtana* hall and ashram. And under Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu's guidance, he personally oversaw the construction.

The *Harmonist* described Jagabandhu Prabhu's manifestation of *śuddha-bhakti* in establishing the landmark temple:

> The new buildings of the Gauḍīya Maṭha are the pious gift of a successful businessman of Calcutta, an inhabitant of Barisal, who is popularly known by initials of his name as JBD. Śrī-yuta Jagabandhu Datta personally supervised every detail of construction and gave all his time, attention, and a large part of his fortune to the building and beautifying of the house of Godhead and His devotees. The temple is eighty-five feet high and built in the genuine Indian style. The *nāṭya-mandira* is a noble hall fronting the temple, excelling in certain respects the best ones in Calcutta. The best and most costly materials have been used in the construction of every part of the buildings, which will remain an enduring memorial of the beneficent piety of their donor and builder.[11]
>
> Jagabandhu never regarded the cost of the buildings as involving any sacrifice to himself. He said that all that was his, was the wish to build the temple of Godhead and also the home of His devotees. The money that was required for the purpose had been supplied by

Śrī Gurudeva. He said that this could not be understood by anyone except himself. He was particularly anxious to disclaim all credit for spending any money of his own on the buildings. This was the argument which he also mainly employed in convincing the heirs of his properties. He told them that he had not touched either his capital or the profits of his business to the extent of a single paisa in building the Gauḍīya Maṭha. He also urged every one to wish to serve the Lord if he wanted to have a proper idea of his case. In no other way any one else could understand or believe what he said.

But it is certain that he did not grudge in the least the enormous cost of the buildings. On the contrary, he was always full of new plans of expenditure. He was extremely fond of the most costly decorations. He felt very sad if any one asked him to reduce his lavish expenditure on decoration. When he was told to give up some of his plans of decoration in view of the fact that they could not be completed within the time at his disposal, he appeared to be very much distressed, taking it to be a great punishment inflicted on him by the Lord for his past misdeeds. He was very particular to pay in cash both for material and labor, saying that if he tried to build on loan he would be in the power of his creditors and might be compelled to use inferior material.

The original plan that he had conceived of the buildings underwent rapid expansion as the work progressed. He always assured his best friend, Śrīpāda Kuñja Bihārī Vidyābhūṣaṇa Prabhu, that he was prepared to spend whatever was necessary for making the temple as beautiful as possible. As the costs mounted up to an ever increasing figure the delight and enthusiasm of Bhakti Rañjana Prabhu proportionately increased. His gladness knew no bounds as the day of inauguration of the buildings drew nigh. He confessed to all his friends that he had no sleep at night, for his anxiety to complete the buildings in time for the inauguration ceremony. The only way to please him was by praising the buildings. If any defect were pointed out he would not rest until the defect had been completely rectified. He demolished costly constructions many times over without the least hesitation to avoid every defect that was detected.

It is not possible to make an actual estimation of the cost of the buildings. Jagabandhu himself never set any limits to his expenditure. In these circumstances the cost is likely to have been high, probably higher than any guess of a businessman. Jagabandhu built the temple of Godhead in the spirit and with the purpose of the true devotee. No one will probably ever know what the buildings actually cost. He made an unconditional gift of the buildings and land to Śrī Gurudeva. This proves the perfection of his faith and must be wholly unintelligible to persons who are less devoted to the service of the servants of Kṛṣṇa. It is the pure selfless soul of JBD that has been translated into the living abode of Godhead and His devotees.

It is necessary to mention a few details regarding the personal exertions of JBD in connection with the buildings of the Maṭha. He was present on the premises from the day when the foundations were laid. He was in the worst state of bodily health at that time and

onward. He, however, chose to accept personal hardship of the most intensive type. He did not care for wind, rain, or sun and attended personally to the laying of one brick upon another. The whole of his time, from early morning to a very late hour into the night, was wholly consecrated to the service of the buildings.

His secular business prospered most wonderfully all the while that he was engaged in this manner. His attachment to the work of actual construction need not, therefore be supposed to be allied to any form of barren asceticism or stoicism. He was able to make the most efficient arrangement for the conduct of his secular affairs by giving practically all his time to the service of the Maṭha. This is also not intelligible to those who have no experience of the real nature of the genuine devotion to the servants of Kṛṣṇa. The service of Godhead is the only complete and true way of fulfilling our duties to humanity. There are, indeed, hypocrites who teach to neglect worldly affairs as the necessity of spiritual life. JBD knew better. He devoted all his attention, time and money to the abode of the servants of Kṛṣṇa without having to neglect his ordinary worldly affairs in any way. No one ever heard him brag of his "spirit of sacrifice." He knew that service to Kṛṣṇa is always a fulfilment of everything and never a sacrifice of anything. But the worldly mind can never understand this.

He also asked all his dependents and relations to devote all their time to the worship of Godhead under the guidance of the really pure devotees of the Gauḍīya Maṭha. This exhortation and his own living example had their effect on their hearts. This is the way in which JBD was making real "provision" for his numerous accepted household. He had no children of his own. He did not believe in the sufficiency of beneficence of any earthly provision. He entrusted to his heirs, by way of their "provision," the task of the due completion of the Gauḍīya Maṭha buildings.

Those rich men, who may be disposed to think that personal labor is unnecessary in the service of Godhead, cherish a fatal blunder from which they can be rescued only by following the example set by JBD. There is no indignity in doing manual service for the Lord. Those who do such service are fully equal to those who are fit to worship Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda in their minds, without the manifestation of this apparently external form of activity. As a matter of fact, neither the mind nor the body can serve Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa may, however, enable both to be employed in His service. As soon as one obtains this mercy of Kṛṣṇa, his bodily and mental activities acquire the spiritual character and become super-mundane and altogether wholesome in their aptitudes. Those who may be disposed to regard JBD as unfit for mental worship and accordingly to undervalue his personal manual labor in connection with the building of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, are themselves unfit to understand the principle of pure devotion to Kṛṣṇa.

The sweeper who worships Kṛṣṇa is infinitely higher than the conceited pseudo-*brāhmaṇa* who scorns any form of the worship of the worshipers of the Supreme Lord. This is not sentimentalism. The realization of this great truth is the only cure both of

sentimentalism and nihilism, which are the cousin-germans of rank atheism.

For kings and savants, no less than for the poor and ignorant, the conduct of this simple, faithful servant of the Lord should serve as a great eye-opener. The same remark is equally applicable to those malicious hypocrites who may choose to regard the temple of Godhead and the abode of His pure devotees as having any similarity in their own showy habitations dedicated to the sedulous cultivation of undiluted sensuousness. It is necessary to build for Godhead and His devotees the most sumptuous edifice. It is unnecessary to build even a hovel for the gratification of one's own sensuous appetites. JBD toiled bareheaded under the burning sun to build the house of Godhead with the accumulations of a life of exemplary industry. His conduct should be the living refutation of the sophistry and casuistry of the whole race of self-seeking atheists of every denomination.[12]

Many persons build temples and establish deities, but Jagabandhu Prabhu was different inasmuch as he gave his full energy, attention, and hard-earned life savings for establishing this temple of Caitanya-*vāṇī.* Throughout the several years over which the project was brought to fruition, he spoke of no other topic. In his zeal to complete it, he wholly ignored medical advice to refrain from excessive physical labor and climbing to high places. Although he often said, "I will not die," his health was so poor as to indicate that he was remaining in the world solely to complete this task—which upon fulfilling, he immediately passed away. In the hours prior to his demise, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura deputed Śrīmad B.P. Tīrtha Mahārāja, Śrī Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī, and others to perform *harināma-saṅkīrtana* by his bedside. At the last moments Jagabandhu Prabhu called out, "Where is Prabhupāda? Where is Kuñjadā?" upon which they swiftly appeared to pour Hari-*kathā* into his thirsty ears as he was departing in full consciousness, in the manner of the glorious *tirobhāva* of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura.[13] It was 19 November 1930, the penultimate day of the inauguration festival. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura declared that this beloved disciple had returned to the spiritual abode.

Śrī Jagabandhu Prabhu's body, sanctified by its dedication to Hari-*sevā,* was brought from his home into the *nāṭya-mandira* of Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, was there blessed by his guru-*mahārāja* and adorned by his godbrothers with *prasāda* flowers and sandalwood pulp, then taken to the Gaṅgā for the last rites. His widows resolved to establish a *samādhi* in front of Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha on the open space where the Theistic Exhibition had been held. With Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's wholehearted sanction, subsequently the bones and ashes from Śrī Jagabandhu Prabhu's cremated form were sprinkled with water from Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa and other holy sites and interred in that *samādh*i.

Each year thereafter, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī observed as a major festival at Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha a "separation ceremony" to honor Śrī Jagabandhu Prabhu, with thousands attending, and himself discoursing with deep appreciation about Śrī Jagabandhu Prabhu's genuine surrender: not only had he contributed money, but had unreservedly and wholly given his very self in service to the Lord.

Śrīpāda Raghunandana Singhji

A descendant of Mahārāja Parīkṣit named Ṭhākura Saheb Śrī-yukta Raghunandana Singhji, an ancestral landlord of the Sitapur District in which Naimiṣāraṇya was situated, became a disciple of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. When Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura visited Naimiṣāraṇya in November 1927 to install a deity of Lord Caitanya, he made a sidetrip to the palatial home and estate of Raghunandana Singhji, who arranged a parade of richly decorated soldiers, elephants, camels, horses, and including both a traditional Indian and a Western band, attracting a turnout of twenty thousand. The members of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's party were captivated by their wealthy godbrother's sincere unaffected behavior and unostentatious lifestyle in the midst of plenty. Śrīpāda Raghunandana Singhji supplied an elephant, buntings, and other pageantry for the party to use while performing *parikramā* of the greater Naimiṣāraṇya area.

Śrīpāda Hayagrīva Brahmacārī

Śrī Heramba Kumāra Bandhopādhyāya, a young man working in a European company in Calcutta, had all material advantages—aristocratic birth, higher education, a well-paying and prestigious job, īlan, and handsome countenance. Yet having been raised with strong spiritual leanings—his mother had made him read *Bhagavad-gītā* daily, and by age eleven he had memorized the entire text—he felt little inclined to pursue worldly ambitions, and by reading a book of Śaṅkarācārya, apathy for ordinary life arose within him. He ran away to Haridwar and ventured far up into the hills, where he stayed for three days and nights under a tree, eating only bael fruit. Then he heard a sound: "Now depart. You will find a *sad*-guru in the very place you came from."

Accordingly Heramba returned to Bengal, and started visiting pilgrimage places along with friends. Some time in 1925 they went to Katwa, then Kuliyā, and from there on to Māyāpur, despite attempts by enemies of the Gauḍīya Maṭha to discourage them from going.[*] They arrived in the afternoon while the deities were resting. A *brahmacārī* gave them full plates of *mahā-prasāda* and suggested they meet Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī: "If you visit him, you will be benefited by hearing Hari-*kathā,* and we also will get to hear more Hari-*kathā*." Entering Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's *bhajana-kuṭīra,* they were awed by his presence. They had been to many holy places and seen many saints, yet none had struck them as he. Intuiting that he must be an intimate associate of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu come directly from the spiritual world, they offered *daṇḍavat* and sat down.

After asking their names and other formalities, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura inquired where they had come from. Already thinking that Bhagavān had steered him to his guru, Heramba responded that they had been to Katwa to have *darśana* of the deity of Mahāprabhu there. In reply Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura explained, "Certainly we should go to see deities, but we should learn *how* to see Them. One cannot see the Lord with eyes of material desire, only with eyes of love." He proceeded to elaborate on the nature of Godhead and the intricacies of Hari-*bhakti,* stressing how the Lord should be seen, thus capturing the young men's hearts and mind and astonishing

them with extraordinary insights and realizations.

In Calcutta, Heramba started frequenting the Gauḍīya Maṭha, and by hearing from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and his disciples and studying their writings he became fully convinced of their doctrine. He was initiated on Rādhāṣṭamī in 1927 with the name Hayagrīva, and soon moved into the Maṭha with the pertinacious resolve to devote his life for this cause and never marry.

Hayagrīva Prabhu soon became a prominent organizer and leading collector in a movement that required a constant influx of funds. He traveled with sannyasis and other senior godbrothers, arranging their itineraries, food, lodging, lecture programs, and appointments. He was always busy, sleeping little and often rising in the morning before other members of the party, going out early for service, and after others had rested at night, fulfilling his prescribed chanting on beads while standing (to keep awake) under a high mosquito net. He considered such dedicated activity the best *jīve dayā,* kindness to living beings, and Vaiṣṇava-*sevā,* service to Vaiṣṇavas. His charming manner of speaking, natural leadership qualities, erudition, and affable dealings, combined with his tall fair handsome figure, immediately endeared him to those he met, many spontaneously offering contributions even before being asked. After several years of performing such service he too began delivering speeches, and by the blessings of the Vaiṣṇavas whom he had so faithfully and selflessly served, he became quite competent in lecturing.

The physical appearance of Hayagrīva Prabhu and Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura being similar, and intercourse between them so congenial, it was not uncommon for outsiders to mistake them as father and son.

On Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's order, Hayagrīva spent about ten years in Madras helping to spearhead the Gauḍīya Maṭha's push into South India. During that time a leading supporter arranged for devotees to learn Tamil, the local vernacular, to better interact with the populace. Yet after just three days of lessons, Hayagrīva received a telegram from his guru-*mahārāja* calling him to Purī, where the topic of his language studies arose. When Hayagrīva admitted that it would take at least six months to learn Tamil, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura advised him to preach in whatever tongues he already knew and not lose valuable time trying to imbibe new ones. "*śuddha-bhakti* is not communicated by language," he explained. "Learning and scholarship may be transmitted through linguistic skills, but *bhakti* can be given only by those who have *bhakti.*"

In 1930 a month-long festival for Janmāṣṭamī was held at Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha. Each day a different dignitary was invited as honorary chairman of the evening meeting. Some students of the internationally renowned scientist C.V. Raman, then based in Calcutta, were among those who regularly attended this program. One day these students complained to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura that although every day a different distinguished person was being made honorary chairman, their world-famous professor had not even been invited. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī answered that he had no objection to Dr. Raman's being the chairman one evening,

and asked Hayagrīva Brahmacārī to invite him.

Hayagrīva Prabhu met Dr. Raman in his research laboratory, set in a huge loft. Since Dr. Raman knew neither Bengali nor Hindi, they spoke in English. On being invited, Dr. Raman replied, "I don't believe in your Keṣṭo-Biṣṭu.* I have no faith in anything that cannot be confirmed by direct sensory experience. I cannot waste my valuable time with imaginary things. I would prefer to attend any conference dealing with science or education."

Hayagrīva Brahmacārī responded, "Your own students are coming regularly to hear from our swamis, and they desired that you be honored in the same manner as so many other Calcutta community leaders. I was asked by my *gurudeva* to invite you. Kindly accede."

Dr. Raman then challenged Śrī Hayagrīva Brahmacārī, "Can you show me your God? If you can show him to me, I will go." One side of the lab had a window overlooking the sprawl of northern Calcutta, and the opposite wall was windowless. Hayagrīva Brahmacārī asked, "Although I can see nothing behind this wall, if I say that nothing exists there, will it be so?"

[Dr. Raman:] "You cannot see what is there, but by using appropriate instruments it becomes possible."

[Hayagrīva Prabhu:] "There is a limit to what your instruments can do. You can see only as far as they allow. Can you say that there's nothing beyond those limits?"

[Dr. Raman:] "I don't give my attention to anything not within sense experience. I will spare my valuable time only if you can actually show me your Bhagavān. Can you do it?"

[Hayagrīva Prabhu:] "If your students were to say that they will study your scientific findings only if you can show them the truth of what you have realized through your experiments, what would you say?"

[Dr. Raman:] "I would make *them* realize it!"

[Hayagrīva Prabhu:] "Can you make them realize it prior to teaching them?"

[Dr. Raman:] "No. I would first have to show them the process through which I myself came to recognize the truth. They will have to follow that process—first earn their B.Sc. degree, then M.Sc., and then study with me for another five years. Then I can make them understand."

[Hayagrīva Prabhu:] "Then why can't the seers of ancient India say the same thing? First follow their process and then see whether you experience Bhagavān's existence. You aren't able to show your students scientific truths unless they adopt your process. Similarly, if you want to experience Bhagavān, you have to follow the appropriate process. Only if it is ineffective can you deny its value. But how can you do so without experimenting?"

Dr. Raman could not answer. After a few moments of silence, he said, "I know nothing about Kṛṣṇa. If I go, I will not be able to say anything. You would be better off inviting someone who knows something about these matters."

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had wanted Hayagrīva Prabhu to accompany the first preachers to the West, and his passport had been secured; but then a well-wisher advised Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to send a mature devotee, rather than a handsome young man, to the England of beautiful young women. Hence the elderly Śrīmad Bhakti Pradīpa Tīrtha was sent instead. Hayagrīva was quite content with this, preferring to stay close to his master's lotus feet rather than go far away with no surety of seeing him again.

In March 1936 Hayagrīva Prabhu was sent with other devotees to Sarabhog, Assam, to prepare for the deity installation in a new temple there. On arrival, the party was shocked to find that no arrangements had been made either for the upcoming visit of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his entourage or for any inaugural festival. Although the event was just a few days away, no invitations had been sent out, no ceremonies or accommodation organized, no collections made, nor any preparations undertaken for mass cooking and feeding. The situation seemed bleak, and cancellation inevitable. Yet with typical supererogatory emprise, Hayagrīva Prabhu applied his "volcanic energy" (as Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura described it) and began working round the clock.* Local dignitaries and the general public from miles around were invited, a brass band and elephant were engaged to receive Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura et al at the station, and temporary residences were constructed from bamboo and straw. Although ingredients for mass *prasāda* distribution could not be procured in such a short time, the thousands of villagers streaming in from all directions brought with them sacks of rice, dal, vegetables, and all else needed for feeding the huge crowds. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was so impressed with the tumultuous welcome accorded him, and the enthusiasm with which the simple villagers participated in the grand three-day celebration, that he declared he would visit every year thereafter.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī remained in Sarbhog for some days after the festival, during which Śrīpāda Āśrama Mahārāja, the *maṭha-rakṣaka,* repeatedly asked Hayagrīva to inform their guru-*mahārāja* that because Nimānanda Prabhu, the leading Assamese devotee, had not performed his duties as expected, the temple opening had almost been cancelled. Fearing to displease his *gurudeva,* Hayagrīva Prabhu was reluctant to convey the message, yet eventually felt obliged to honor the persistent requests of his senior godbrother. Later that day Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was pacing up and down the front porch of the ashram talking to Hayagrīva Prabhu, who was walking just behind fanning him. Hayagrīva Prabhu took the opportunity to interject Āśrama Mahārāja's complaint—and was immediately reprimanded. But on seeing how his words had affected this disciple, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī changed his mood and fondly praised him, whereupon Hayagrīva somberly mused that perhaps his *gurudeva* considered him unable to take criticism. Then Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī spoke some intimate words:

> Why do you want so much? And why let this matter bother you so? It is not proper to

expect much assistance from anyone else. Your service to your guru and all its details are fully your responsibility. You should be grateful if anyone else contributes to it in any way. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the sole custodian of all matters pertaining to Kṛṣṇa's pleasure. If anyone comes forward to help Her, She becomes filled with gratitude.

Śrī Pañcānana Tarkaratna was a *smārta paṇḍita* famous for his collossal feat of having translated the eighteen main *Purāṇas* and other *śāstras* into Bengali. Proud of his brahminical status and scholarship, he publicly opposed the Gauḍīya Maṭha, specifically its position on *daiva-varṇāśrama.* In October 1936 Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had Paṇḍita Pañcānana visited by Hayagrīva Prabhu. In polite discussion, both profusely quoting *śāstra,* Hayagrīva refuted Pañcānana Tarkaratna's position. Soon thereafter a synopsis of the conversation was recorded in the *Gauḍīya*, to the keen embarrasment of that renowned scholar.[14]

After Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's departure, Śrī Hayagrīva Brahmacārī took *sannyāsa,* with the name Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Dayita Mādhava Mahārāja. Subsequently, not only did he preach widely and establish several Maṭhas, but by annually observing the Vyāsa-*pūjā* of his guru in Assam, he also fulfilled Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's desire to be present there each year.[15]

Śrīpāda Siddha-svarūpa Vidyā-vāgīśa Prabhu

To the leaders of a student committee organizing a celebration of the birthday of Swami Vivekananda, Śrīmad B.V. Bhāratī Mahārāja suggested that he could offer an address on the occasion—to which they consented. Thereat, Śrīmad Bhāratī Mahārāja spoke nothing about Vivekananda, but instead discoursed for one and a half hours on the first verse of *Bhagavad-gītā,* offering multiple *śāstrīya* references and completing his presentation with *saṅkīrtana* and dancing. The head of the student committee was an exceptionally bright boy, fully steeped in *Śrī Ramakrishna Kathāmṛta,* the collected sayings and teachings of Ramakrishna, and considered that book as *śāstra* and ultimate spiritual conclusion. However, he was so impressed with Śrīmad Bhāratī Mahārāja's *darśana, bhāṣaṇa* (speech), *kīrtana,* and *nartana* (dancing) that he decided to immediately join the Gauḍīya Maṭha.

He left home with only the clothes he was wearing, telling his mother that he was going to visit his married elder sister—but headed straight for Ultadingi Road. Soon forcibly taken back by his relatives, he adopted the strategy of Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī of behaving like an ordinary youth with no interest in Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti,* until his family members slackened their vigilance, and then taking the next opportunity to flee again. This time it worked.

Soon initiated as Siddha-svarūpa Brahmacārī, his vitriolic preaching against bogus gurus and avatars precipitated much indignant response. One time in a public meeting he caused uproar by openly decrying the very Ramakrishna Mission that he had formerly so much adored.[*] His travels typically increased the volume of protest letters sent to the *Gauḍīya,* which printed several complaints about him along with rebuttals of the incorrect philosophical premises they were based on. When devotees objected that Siddha-svarūpa was unnecessarily disturbing the

public, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura expressed approval of Siddha-svarūpa's preaching.

On another occasion, while Siddha-svarūpa Brahmacārī was addressing an assembly, a gentleman declared that all is one and everything is equal. In reply, Siddha-svarūpa asked him if his father is equal to a dog. Since in Bengali culture the worst insult is to denigrate another's parents, that man heatedly accused Siddha-svarūpa of abusing him. But Siddha-svarūpa simply requested him to accept the ramifications of his statement: if everything is equal, then his father is nondifferent from a dog.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī honored Siddha-svarūpa Brahmacārī with the title Vidyā-vāgīśa (master in Vedic knowledge and speech), and alluding to his forceful preaching style, told him, "You are our second Bhāratī Mahārāja," a compliment for both Siddha-svarūpa Prabhu and Śrīmad Bhāratī Mahārāja.

After Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's disappearance Siddha-svarūpa Brahmacārī took *sannyāsa,* being renamed Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Śrīrūpa Siddhāntī Mahārāja. By composing and publishing commentaries on *Vedānta-sūtra* and the principal *Upaniṣads,* he fulfilled a stated desire of his guru.

Śrīpāda Sajjanānanda Brahmacārī

For many years Śrī Sajjanānanda Brahmacārī was the cook and personal assistant of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. He was dubbed Sajjana Mahārāja after the North Indian custom of addressing *brāhmaṇa* cooks as Mahārāja. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura personally instructed Sajjanānanda how to cook for him and thereafter rarely allowed anyone else to perform this service.

Often at mealtimes Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would be absorbed in delivering Hari-*kathā,* and whether it was informally to guests or addressing a gathering, Sajjana Mahārāja would try to interrupt him to come for his repast. But once having begun speaking Hari-*kathā,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī usually continued on and on and did not like to be disturbed. He repeatedly instructed Sajjana Mahārāja to always wait until he had finished, yet Sajjanānanda routinely butted in.

As Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's traveling assistant, Sajjana Mahārāja tended him like a mother—cooking, washing and ironing his clothes, and rendering other personal services.

Śrīpāda Svādhikārānanda Brahmacārī

Becoming attracted to Kṛṣṇa consciousness while a B.A. student in Dacca, a young man from East Bengal joined the Gauḍīya Maṭha after graduating and was initiated by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, receiving the name Svādhikārānanda dāsa Brahmacārī.

Svādhikārānanda Prabhu took seriously to *nāma-bhajana* and aspired to reduce his eating and

sleeping so as to chant many rounds. He would tie his *śikhā* to a bamboo pole so that whenever his head nodded he would jerk awake. Although this system had been described in the medieval Gauḍīya hagiography *Karṇānanda,* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura disapproved it.

When some devotees complained that Svādhikārānanda was rendering no practical service, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī approved his chanting and said that they should encourage him. He added that they should place a newspaper advertisement inviting all sincere men willing to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa day and night to come join the Gauḍīya Maṭha. The advertisement was placed, and a few men came and went, while Svādhikārānanda Prabhu went on chanting. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī ordered his disciples to provide whatever facilities Svādhikārānanda needed, which were anyway minimal.

On another occasion, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura expressed his preference that Svādhikārānanda should also preach. Śrīmat Śrīdhara Mahārāja, who was close to Svādhikārānanda and was the incumbent *maṭha-rakṣaka* in Delhi, wrote to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura that Svādhikārānanda was passing an eremitic existence in the remote ashram at Baliyati, simply chanting on beads without performing other services. He proposed calling Svādhikārānanda to help him in Delhi and Punjab. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura replied, "If you can bring him there for preaching, you will be doing the service of a real friend to him. I don't accept that sitting in the jungle of Baliyati and merely counting beads is proper cultivation of Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti.*"

When Svādhikārānanda Prabhu was temporararily engaged as a *pūjārī* at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, he performed *ārati* and the other items of *arcana* simply by ringing the bell and chanting *harināma.* Although this was unconventional, it was in accord with Svādhikārānanda Prabhu's firm conviction in *śāstrīya* statements that by *harināma* alone all other functions of *bhakti* are effected:

> *nava-vidhā bhakti pūrṇa nāma haite haya*
>
> One can complete the nine processes of *bhakti* simply by chanting the holy name. (Cc 2.15.107)

Svādhikārānanda Brahmacārī was also a principal *kīrtanīyā* of the Gauḍīya Maṭha. He would alternate with Praṇavānanda Prabhu in leading *kīrtana* at major festivals.

In later life Svādhikārānanda Prabhu was known as Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja.[*] His dedication to chanting having fructified to the perfectional stage, he continued his sole engagement of chanting—mostly the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* and also selections from the innumerable *kīrtanas* and *śāstrīya* verses he had committed to memory. He chanted sweetly and earnestly, enunciating the holy names clearly, over and over throughout the day and night, and was hardly seen to sleep.

Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja was loved by all. Neither anger nor envy were ever detected in him, nor did he indulge in idle talk. He was always chanting and often laughed. When

presented with contentious issues, his only response would be “Hare Kṛṣṇa!” and a chuckle.

Śrīpāda Trailokyanātha Rāya

An addict of opium, ganja, pan, bidis, cigarettes—all common intoxicants except alcohol—Śrī Trailokyanātha Rāya described himself as “a graduate of intoxication.” Besides, as a *śākta* he would offer *bali-dāna* during Durgā-*pūjā*. But his life changed abruptly after hearing lectures given by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī for seven days in Cuttack, and in 1929 he and his wife took *harināma* from him. At that time Trailokyanātha Prabhu brought his pipe, pan box, and other intoxicant paraphernalia before his guru-*mahārāja,* declaring, “I'm finished with all this!”

His astonished friends and relatives warned him that by suddenly giving up intoxicants he might suffer heart failure. Trailokyanātha Prabhu retorted, “Let me die. I won't go back.” By Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's mercy no harm came to him, and he never again took intoxicants. Furthermore, by his encouragement his entire family cultivated Hari-*bhajana,* and eventually all his children, including Jati Śekhara Prabhu, took *harināma* from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.[†]

Śrīpāda Jati Śekhara Bhakti-kumuda Prabhu

Śrī Jatīndra Rāya was born in Cuttack on 17 April 1910 in a family descending from Śrī Hiraṇya Majumdāra and Śrī Govardhana Majumdāra, the uncle and father of Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī. His sister was married to a descendant of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura domiciled at Chotimangalpur. Jatīndra's family home adjoined that of Śrī Jānakīnātha Bose, among whose sons Subhash treated young Jatīndra as a junior brother. From early life Jatīndra showed particular adeptness in writing in both Bengali and Oriya, had a special interest in drama and literature, and was an outstanding student in all subjects. He learned English by spending his school lunch breaks at the nearby law court, where his father was employed.

In childhood Jatīndra's parents regularly took him to the Saccidānanda Maṭha, at that time in a rented building. When still a young boy, he became inspired upon hearing from the Maṭha devotees the *phala-śruti* of *Gurvaṣṭaka:*

> *śrīmad-guror aṣṭakam etad uccair*
> *brāhme muhūrte paṭhati prayatnāt*
> *yas tena vṛndāvana-nātha-sākṣāt*
> *sevaiva labhyā januṣo ‘nta eva*
>
> At the time of death, direct service to Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Vṛndāvana, is obtained by one who during *brāhma-muhūrta* loudly recites with great care and attention this beautiful prayer to the guru.

Contemplation of this wakened in him deep devotional ardor. From the age of fifteen or sixteen, after returning home from school in the evening and taking his meal, he would pass the

night at Saccidānanda Maṭha and rise early the next morning to join in reciting *Gurvaṣṭaka.* A *maṭha-vāsī* grumped, "This boy doesn't perform any service. He comes at night only to sleep." Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura responded, "Don't disturb him. Let him come." Then he asked Jatīndra why he did so. "I like to chant *Gurvaṣṭaka,*" he said. "My house is quite far, so I come here to wake early and attend the service." Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura told the devotee who had complained, "See why he stays overnight: he has genuine interest in *bhakti.*"

When Jatīndra was newly residing at the Maṭha, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī asked him if he was reading *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata,* to which Jatīndra replied no. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī then instructed him to read it before *maṅgala-ārati,* but Jatīndra said that it might be difficult because he had a bad cough. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī then told him, "Starting from tomorrow, read it clearly and loudly from four to five o'clock every morning and your cough will go away."

Also when still new at the Maṭha, Jatīndra once appealed to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura that the *maṭha-rakṣaka* would not give him laundry soap. So Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura told Vāsudeva Prabhu to see that Jatīndra got some. Back downstairs, Vāsudeva Prabhu admonished Jatīndra, "You have not come here for wealth, money, fame, *mukti,* or *bhukti* (sensual enjoyment). Why then are you troubling Guru-mahārāja for such a trivial thing as soap? You could have asked me." From upstairs Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī heard that and explained, "He comes to me because he loves me. Let him come for anything he needs. He doesn't know to whom he should go, so let him come to me."

Both Śrīmad B.P. Tīrtha Mahārāja and Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu helped this young boy grow in Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti* by instructing him and engaging him in various services, particularly proofreading and going with *maṭha-vāsīs* for *bhikṣā.*

Once when a lawyer donated worm-infested rice, Jatīndra instructed him in the significance of offering items to the Lord, hearing which the lawyer became satisfied and later related the incident to Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu.

When a deputy magistrate who was a neighbor of Jatīndra's family was made chairman of a religious meeting at Cuttack Town Hall, Jatīndra attended and openly protested that because that man was addicted to the five principal vices of Kali-yuga—flesh-eating, intoxication, womanizing, gambling, and excessively accumulating wealth—he was unfit to chair such an assembly. Jatīndra's friends started clapping and most of the attendees joined in. Shamed, that magistrate promptly forswore his bad habits, and by calling Jatīndra to his home for religious instruction, gradually came to the path of pure devotion.

Prior to visiting Jajpur in 1930 with Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, Śrīmat Tīrtha Mahārāja and Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu sent Jatīndra and other Saccidānanda Maṭha residents to prepare the Jagannātha Dharmaśālā for their stopover.[*] After Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī arrived, Jatīndra took the opportunity to directly request *harināma;* but Vāsudeva Prabhu intervened, saying that there was no need to take *harināma* at such a young age, and that first a candidate's

faith and determination had to be tested. Seeing Jatīndra's crestfallen look, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī overruled Vāsudeva Prabhu and, on 25 December 1930 on the bank of the Vaitaraṇī, awarded *harināma* to Jatīndra. Before the ceremony, Vāsudeva Prabhu personally applied *tilaka* on Jatīndra's body at the twelve designated places.[*]

At this time Jatīndra was still in college, and with some fellow students he became involved in Gandhi's non-cooperation movement. Once while picketing, he and others were beaten with sticks. When Gandhi visited Cuttack, Jatīndra came forward from the vast crowd and pertly questioned him, "The push for *khādi* has helped Indians yet harmed the Manchester English. Is there a means whereby both can be benefited?"[†] Gandhi answered that his endeavors were conceived for the uplift of all.

In 1931, when Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was looking for writers and helpers to start regular publication of the *Paramārthī* in Oriya, he called Jatīndra and asked if he could write in Oriya. "A little," was his reply. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura then asked him if he knew the meaning of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verses 11.5.33–34 describing Lord Caitanya's pastimes. When Jatīndra answered yes, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura asked him to explain them in writing. Jatīndra said he would try. After a few days he submitted not just a written explanation, but a poetic verse rendition. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura showed the poem to Śrī Gopāla-candra Praharārāja, the most reputed contemporary scholar of the Oriya language and compiler of the famous seven-volume *Śrī Pūrṇacandra Bhāṣākośa* dictionary of Oriya, who happened to be visiting. Śrī Praharārāja praised the composition and presented a full set of his dictionary to Jatīndra. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura told Jatīndra, "From the first day I saw you I knew that you were a writer."[‡]

Then Jatīndra was appointed under Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu's guidance as working editor for the upcoming *Paramārthī.* Yet due to his young age he was soon replaced by an elder Vaiṣṇava. Nevertheless, from its inception Jatīndra was the *Paramārthī's* main contributor, editor, and proofreader—services he continued into old age. Nearly all his articles remained unsigned, and in later years he published many compositions in the names of his followers. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī gave Jatīndra much individual instruction concerning what and how to write for the *Paramārthī,* particularly instructing him that any blasphemy or disrespect of guru or Vaiṣṇavas or anything written against Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, must be unflinchingly refuted in the strongest language.

Shortly after taking up service for the *Paramārthī,* Jatīndra's elder brother Śrī Śacīndra Rāya, who also had received *harināma* from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, agreed to take full responsibility for their widowed mother, thus freeing Jatīndra to leave home for *maṭha-vāsa.*

Jatīndra was given the service of distributing *Nadia Prakash* to subscribers in Cuttack. The newspaper came daily from Calcutta by train, and after his daytime studies he would spend the evening distributing it. There were hardly twenty subscribers, so Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī proposed, "If you can enlist a hundred subscribers in Cuttack I will buy a cycle for your deliveries." Jatīndra succeeded in enlisting not only a hundred subscribers in Cuttack, but also a further hundred in Berhampur, upon which Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was pleased

to present him a Raleigh bicycle, which facilitated his signing up many extra subscribers.[*]

In July 1933, while the new building of the Saccidānanda Maṭha was under construction, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura stayed for a week by the bank of the river Mahānadī, on the upper floor of the Cuttack telegraph office, as arranged by the superintendent of that department, his disciple Śrī Sudarśana Sanātana Prabhu. Although Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura never allowed his disciples to clean his toilet, insisting that it be done by a *methara,* Jatīndra personally performed this service during that period.[†] On the third day, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura noticed him descending the stairs, broom in hand, and told him to accept *dīkṣā.* Jatīndra got tonsured, took bath in the Mahānadī, and that very day in the telegraph office received *dīkṣā* mantras and the name Jati Śekhara dāsa. The sacrifice and other proceedings accompanying *dīkṣā* were performed that same day at the Maṭha by Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu.

Soon appointed as a messenger for Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu, Jati Śekhara Prabhu would deliver letters and verbal communications and invite or summon persons to see him. He always tried his best to please Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu, who however never praised him and sometimes scolded him even without apparent cause. Nonetheless, Jati Śekhara Prabhu was ever grateful for the genuine care and shelter given by Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu.

Once Jati Śekhara Prabhu told Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu, "Śrīmad Purī Mahārāja said that today he will go with me for *bhikṣā.*" Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu replied, "Don't say, 'He will go with me,' but, 'I will go with him.' He is senior to you." In one sense Jati Śekhara Prabhu was correct, because he was regularly going on *bhikṣā* in Cuttack, so naturally the visiting Mahārāja would be guided by him. Yet Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu was punctilious in upholding proper etiquette.

One evening during the *kīrtana* at Saccidānanda Maṭha before Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura arrived to discourse, Jati Śekhara Prabhu was dozing while sitting and ostensibly playing *mṛdaṅga.* Seeing this, Kīrtana Brahmacārī snatched the drum away from him. Just then Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura appeared and asked Kīrtana Brahmacārī why he had done that. "Because he is sleeping," answered Kīrtana Prabhu. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura then told Jati Śekhara Prabhu, "Don't doze," and also instructed Kīrtana Brahmacārī, "If he is at fault, correct him. But don't stop another devotee's service."

Once Jati Śekhara Prabhu yawned while talking with Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, who then instructed him to cover his face with a cloth when yawning. Another time, Jati Śekhara Prabhu was nodding his head in agreement while Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was talking to him. "Are you simply nodding or do you actually understand what I am saying?" asked Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī—indicating that one should not thoughtlessly agree with *śrī-gurudeva* but should try to comprehend what he says.

Once at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura admonished Jati Śekhara Prabhu for brushing dust from a first-floor veranda onto the ground floor: "You are cleaning one place but dirtying another, not considering that another devotee will have to sweep below."

Prior to a train journey from Cuttack to Purī, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī told Jati Śekhara Prabhu to reserve a seat for him either on the platform or in the waiting room. By mistake Jati Śekhara Prabhu arranged a seat in the ladies' waiting room. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura mildly rebuked him, "You should have noticed what you were doing." And one time when Jati Śekhara Prabhu was transporting cooking paraphernalia by train, to save money he did not hire a coolie to help him unload. Consequently the train departed with some of the equipment still on board. When Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was told of that he spoofed, "Penny wise, pound foolish."

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura appreciated that Jati Śekhara Prabhu regularly attended all temple functions, including the full morning and evening programs, and enthusiastically performed various services from morning till night. He once commended him in the presence of Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu, who responded, "No, he's not all that good. He's not doing much."

When Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī once called Jati Śekhara Prabhu to go with him by car, Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu restrained Jati Śekhara Prabhu: "It is not proper for a disciple to sit on the same seat as his guru. *Gurudeva* may call you but you should not go. Better you follow by ricksha."

As Jati Śekhara Prabhu was about to return to Cuttack after attending the gala Annakūṭa festival at Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha in Purī, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī called him to his room atop Caṭaka Parvata. After inquiring about the welfare of his family, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī gave Jati Śekhara Prabhu a mammoth *rasagullā* from the Annakūṭa to present them.

Jati Śekhara Prabhu recalled that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was most affectionate toward him, especially because he was young and submissive. Sometimes Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would give him *rasagullās,* and once gave him two big *gulābjāmuns,* saying that one was for him and one for the other devotees.*

Upon being awarded various distinctions by the Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā, Jati Śekhara Prabhu's full name gradually became Śrī Jati Śekhara dāsa Brahmacārī Bhakti-śāstrī Bhakti-kumuda Upadeśaka.

Disturbed by continuing factionalism and quarrels within the Gauḍīya Mission, Śrī Jati Śekhara dāsa Brahmacārī left it in 1946 and entered the *gṛhastha-āśrama*.

Śrīpāda Ādi-keśava Prabhu (O.B.L. Kapoor)

After receiving his M.A. in philosophy from Allahabad University, O.B.L. Kapoor began searching for a spiritual guide, a desire that had been occupying his mind for some years. In the summer of 1931, at age twenty-two, he visited Nainital, a sub-Himālayan hill station, where Śrīmad Giri Mahārāja of the Gauḍīya Maṭha was giving a series of lectures announced as being o n *Bhagavad-gītā,* although he spoke mostly about Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His teachings.

Impressed by Śrīmad Giri Mahārāja's presentation, Kapoor went to meet him afterward, and together they discussed philosophy for several days. Having assiduously studied Śaṅkarācārya's *advaita-vāda,* Kapoor was convinced of its superiority and thus was impervious to Śrīmad Giri Mahārāja's efforts to disenchant him. Yet his interest in Lord Caitanya and His teachings was piqued, so when Śrīmad Giri Mahārāja suggested that he meet Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in Calcutta, Kapoor readily agreed. "Our guru-*mahārāja* has complete knowledge of *śāstra,*" Giri Mahārāja told him, "and is fully pure and transcendental."

Proceeding toward Calcutta, Kapoor first stopped at Allahabad and was delighted to discover that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had coincidentally just arrived there. Desiring to meet him, Kapoor visited the Maṭha and was told to wait in the room adjacent to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's quarters. When Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī emerged, Kapoor was instantly attracted just by seeing him. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī sat in a chair and began talking to Kapoor, who sat on the floor at his feet. Having already been informed by Giri Mahārāja about this inquisitive young man's entrenchment in *advaita-vāda,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī immediately began to demolish monism by scriptural evidence and logic. Kapoor just sat and listened, with no opportunity to reply to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's surcharged words. Yet after some time Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's mood changed, and he started describing Vraja-*līlā.* This continued for about an hour. Then suddenly, distracted by emotion, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī rose and entered his room.

Although charmed by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's tableau of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana, Kapoor was still far from convinced of the genuineness of Gauḍīya *siddhānta.* Yet he returned day after day as long as Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was in Allahabad and, by receiving lucid responses to his multiple questions, was gradually drawn closer to him.

About ten days after Kapoor had first met him, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura fulfilled an invitation by the Maharaja of Banaras to visit that city, and allowed Kapoor to accompany him. During their fifteen-day stay, Kapoor had ample opportunity to discuss with Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and hear him discourse to the many people who visited him. From Banaras, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura returned to Calcutta, where Kapoor soon rejoined him. The next destination was Darjeeling, and Kapoor also went there.

On Kārtika-*pūrṇimā* in Allahabad, Kapoor, now fully weaned from *advaita-vāda,* and his wife accepted *harināma.* They were given beads and told to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra as much as possible, not a fixed number of *mālās.* In 1932 Kapoor took leave from his work at Bombay University to attend the Vraja-maṇḍala Parikramā, during which he was awarded *dīkṣā* at Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

From time to time Ādi-keśava Prabhu journeyed to Calcutta to gain Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's association, and he kept regular correspondence with Professor Sanyal. He would write letters to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, not about philosophy, since now he was convinced, but for personal advice regarding *sādhana*. Having a rather high opinion of himself, he once asked Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to evaluate his stage in *bhakti*. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura replied, "First" (most

neophyte).[*]

On Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's suggestion and under his close supervision, O.B.L. Kapoor wrote a thesis on the philosophy of Śrī Caitanya, and hence became the first Ph.D. from the University of Allahabad. He was masterly in Hindi and English, and Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura instructed him to also learn Bengali. Dr. Kapoor contributed several English articles to the *Harmonist*.[†]

Śrīpāda Indra Nārāyaṇa-candra Bhakti Bhūṣaṇa

Inspired by the preaching and purity of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his followers, a zamindar named Indra Nārāyaṇa-candra erected at the Yogapīṭha on the bank of Gaura-kuṇḍa the Indra Nārāyaṇa Dharmaśālā, which was later converted into the premises of the Thakur Bhakti Vinode Institute. He also committed to build at Advaita Bhavan a brick temple and a sturdy decorated gate, but only the foundations of these were completed before his passing. He donated for establishing the shrine and steps thereof for Lord Caitanya's lotus feet in Mandar, and gave many other contributions to help further the goals of the Gauḍīya Maṭha. He was awarded *dīkṣā* shortly before departing this world in December 1931.

While Indra Nārāyaṇa Prabhu was once out for a stroll, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī happened to pass in a car. Indra Nārāyaṇa Prabhu immediately offered *daṇḍavat*—flat in the soggy mud. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had the car stopped and asked his disciple why he had done that, to which the mud-clotted Indra Nārāyaṇa cheerfully replied, “We cannot but do so, for we have the sole duty to make prostration to the Vaiṣṇava. Our *daṇḍavat* is our only actual wealth.”

Śrīpāda Cintāmaṇi Nāyak

A betel merchant of Cuttack, Śrī Cintāmaṇi Nāyak, had a *śālagrāma-śilā* famous for fulfilling the desires of those who pleased Him.[*] One night in a dream the *śālagrāma-śilā* told Cintāmaṇi to present Him to a sadhu, along with a plot of land for building a temple. Since the *śilā* did not mention any particular name, Cintāmaṇi Babu wrote on separate pieces of paper the names of various *maṭhas* in Cuttack, then blindfolded his daughter and told her to pick one. She chose the Saccidānanda Maṭha, which at that time was in a rented house.

Thereupon Cintāmaṇi Babu presented the *śilā,* and also a garden adjacent to his own residence, to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and the Gauḍīya Maṭha. But some rented shops fronted that property, leaving only a small opening for entrance, so Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī asked Cintāmaṇi Babu to also donate the piece that the shops stood on. Cintāmaṇi consented, the shops were demolished, and a boundary wall was erected at the site of the planned Maṭha.

Being moderately wealthy, Cintāmaṇi Babu declared that he would spend all his money for exclusive service to Bhagavān. Shortly thereafter, the *śālagrāma-śilā* again manifested in a dream and told him to accept *harināma* from Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, which he did.

The same *śālagrāma-śilā* also gave *darśana* in a dream to one Vinodinī devī of Cuttack, telling her to build a temple for Him in a place where there were many coconut trees. Vinodinī devī searched throughout the town and finally found the right place: the plot given by Cintāmaṇi Babu. She then undertook to finance the temple construction. Previously Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had been trying to locate a site for a new Maṭha, yet now without personal endeavor everything was arranged by Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī wanted to install Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa deities immediately, even while the new temple was under construction, because the rented house in which the Maṭha was then situated was unsuitable. So Cintāmaṇi Babu agreed to move to one of his smaller houses until the building was completed, allocating his prior residence for the deities. About two years later, in 1932, the new temple of Saccidānanda Maṭha was established.

Śrīpāda Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu

Later world-famous as His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Śrī Abhaya Caraṇa De was given the name Śrī Abhaya Caraṇāravinda dāsa at the time of initiation.[*] During his householder life he was normally addressed and referred to by Gauḍīya Maṭha members and others as Abhayadā or Abhaya Babu.

Śrī Jati Śekhara Prabhu related that he first met Śrī Abhaya Caraṇa Prabhu on the seashore in Purī while collecting alms for the Maṭha, and requested him to come to Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha for *darśana* of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Abhaya Babu gave a three-rupee donation and took a receipt.

Shortly after Jati Śekhara joined the mission full-time, while availing of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's association in Purī he was ordered to go to Calcutta. Because he was still young and inexperienced and this would be his first trip to such a big city, he was sent in the escort of Abhaya Babu, who was about to return.

After the opening of Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, whenever Abhaya Babu was in Calcutta he would visit every two or three days. He dressed simply but neatly with dhoti, *pāñjābī,* and *cādar,* and was generally smiling and jolly.

Whenever Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was present at Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Abhayadā would go directly to meet him, without soliciting anyone else's permission. Sometimes he also met Vāsudeva Prabhu, yet usually would not mix much with others. Some godbrothers would criticize, “Who is this overly bold householder, who without consulting us goes directly to speak with Guru-mahārāja?” But Abhayadā did not care for their comments.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was always pleased to see Abhayadā, noting his eagerness to hear and his ability to grasp Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti* as he was teaching it, and because he knew that Abhayadā liked to preach.

Circa 1934 Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu was present when Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was discussing with Gauḍīya Maṭha leaders about starting a new English magazine to complement the highly philosophical *Harmonist* by presenting Gauḍīya teachings in a more broadly appealing manner. Three possibilities were broached for the title: *Universal Brotherhood, Universal Truth,* and *Gauḍīya Message.* But it was Abhayadā's suggestion of *Back to Godhead* that met with Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's approval. *Back to Godhead* was a phrase that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had coined and often used. He would say, "'To go back home, back to Godhead' is the motto of the Gauḍīya Maṭha." Shortly afterward he delivered a lecture on this subject. Yet somehow the magazine was never begun. So on Janmāṣṭamī of that year, in his upstairs room at Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī told Abhaya to himself start a periodical of the name *Back to Godhead.*

Being proficient in English, Abhaya Prabhu was one of the devotees selected to attend Sir John Anderson, governor of Bengal, upon his visit to Māyāpur in January 1935.[16]

In his room at Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī sometimes personally gave *mahā-prasāda* to Abhaya, and once called him to accept a full plate of *mahā-prasāda.* Jati Śekhara Prabhu had never seen Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī do this for anyone else.

Abhaya Prabhu once asked Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura about the relevance of *bhoga* (enjoyment) and *tyāga* (renunciation) in devotional life, citing the behavior of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, who left everything for Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's service, and Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya, who served Lord Caitanya as an opulent householder; both were highly exalted devotees, yet one renounced everything whereas the other remained in family life. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī replied by giving the example of how a woman in Vedic culture would dress: when her husband was absent, she would wear plain clothes and no ornaments and not comb her hair, but when he was at home she would bathe twice daily, dress herself attractively, apply perfumed oil and ornaments to her body, and appear fully decorated for his pleasure; her acceptance or renunciation of attractive appearance was based on service to her husband. Similarly, a devotee is prepared to renounce everything for the sake of serving Kṛṣṇa, yet is also willing to live in luxury if thereby Kṛṣṇa can be better served. For a devotee there is no personal consideration; he simply wishes to serve Kṛṣṇa as well as possible and conducts his life accordingly.[17]*

Once when Abhaya Prabhu arrived at Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was pacing along the balcony of his quarters, surrounded by several leading sannyasis and *brahmacārīs.* As Abhaya Prabhu was going up the stairs, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī noticed and motioned for him to come near. Abhaya Prabhu approached slowly and humbly. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī greeted him affectionately, then opened his door and beckoned him inside, where they remained alone for quite some time. Amazed, the other devotees discussed among themselves how their *gurudeva* was favoring a lesser-known *gṛhastha* living outside the Maṭha.[18]

In Kārtika 1935, in his room at the Kuñja-bihārī Maṭha in Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura spoke a few words to Abhaya Prabhu that would alter the course of religious history:

"If you ever get money, print books."*

Abhaya Prabhu was present in Bombay during a discussion regarding who to send to the West. Śrī Narottama Brahmacārī had just been proposed, yet he was reluctant to go so far from his *gurudeva's* lotus feet. Then Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura himself put forward the name of Abhaya: "He will go. Certainly he will be able to do it. He is also preaching in English. So there is no problem if you do not go. He will go."[19]

Śrīpāda Nayanānanda Bābājī (formerly Satprasaṅgānanda Brahmacārī) related the following anecdote:

> The last year that our *gurudeva* organized and performed Navadvīpa-dhāma Parikramā, thousands of pilgrims assembled at our Cāṅpāhāṭi temple. There was an entire village of tents stretching in all directions. On the afternoon of the last day, one of our godbrothers had just arrived in Navadvīpa, recently come from London by ship. He had gone there to preach but had returned without meeting full success. That evening during his lecture, Guru-mahārāja explained his earnest desire that Caitanya Mahāprabhu's teachings be spread in the Western countries. He said that this was the last request of his mother, Śrīmatī Bhagavatī-devī, to him before she left this world, and that indeed it would happen. Consequently, he had been willing to take the lifeblood of the Gauḍīya Maṭha funds to send devotees there, yet their attempts had been largely unsuccessful.
>
> At that point in his talk I noticed something mysterious happening. Guru-mahārāja had been looking out at the packed crowd of devotees, especially in the front, where all the sannyasis and *brahmacārīs* in red cloth were. Then he turned his head and looked over to his left side, where I was standing. He was looking intently at someone and became silent for some time. I happened to look behind me and saw that the person with whom he was making eye contact was Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu. I felt that they were looking at each other in a special way. Then Guru-mahārāja turned and again addressed the audience in front of him and said, "But I have a prediction. However long in the future it may be, one of my disciples will cross the ocean and bring back the entire world."[20]

Śrīpāda Rādhā-ramaṇa Brahmacārī

While Śrīmad Bon Mahārāja and Śrī Praṇavānanda Brahmacārī were giving discourses for a few days at the home of their godbrother Vaikuṇṭhanātha dāsa Adhikārī, who was a zamindar, *jyotiṣī,* and doctor, they remarked about his third and youngest son, Rādhā-ramaṇa, "This boy is extraordinary. Unlike most children of his age (he was eleven), he is more interested in Hari-*kathā* than playing." Vaikuṇṭhanātha Prabhu replied, "He has always been like that. Would you like to take him to the Maṭha?" "We would be delighted to," they answered. So when slightly older, Rādhā-ramaṇa was sent to Śrī Caitanya Maṭha.

In childish contrariness Rādhā-ramaṇa often quarreled with other *maṭha-vāsīs,* yet he feared Vāsudeva Prabhu and Śrīmat Tīrtha Mahārāja and was like an angel in their presence.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura became fond of this lad and initiated him as Rādhā-ramaṇa Brahmacārī. He sent him to school and even personally tutored him. After his basic secular education was completed, Rādhā-ramaṇa studied Sanskrit at Māyāpur, and thereafter was sent to assist preaching efforts in various places.

When Rādhā-ramaṇa left home his mother had advised him, "Always remember why you are going to live at the Maṭha." At that time he could not grasp what his mother meant, but when he reached early teens it dawned on him that even while living in the Maṭha one can remain oblivious to its inherent purpose and become caught up in bodily, mental, or social considerations extraneous to *śuddha-bhakti.*

Initially Rādhā-ramaṇa looked upon the Maṭha inmates as gods. Yet eventually he came to another realization: sincere *maṭha-vāsīs* are far greater than the gods in heaven; to compare them to mere gods is actually belittling, for they are worshipable by the gods.

Although so young, Rādhā-ramaṇa was among the first Gauḍīya emissaries sent to Burma. One day while there he told the party leader, Śrīpāda Jācaka Mahārāja, that he disagreed with Mahāprabhu's seminal edict *jīvera 'svarūpa' haya—kṛṣṇera 'nitya-dāsa':* "By constitutional position the living entity is an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa."[21] Jācaka Mahārāja angrily responded, "Are you crazy to disagree with Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī?" Rādhā-ramaṇa Prabhu said, "I shall write an article about this."

So he did, and sent the article to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in care of his editors. Praṇavānanda Prabhu perused it and smilingly showed it to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Rādhā-ramaṇa had written, "Certainly I am an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa. However, at this stage I don't know Kṛṣṇa, so I have no realization of that relationship; if I were to say it now, it would merely be lip service. But I do know my *gurudeva* and recognize myself as his eternal servant. By his grace, perhaps one day I will come to know Kṛṣṇa. Only then, not before, will I appreciate my position as Kṛṣṇa's eternal servant. Now I understand that I am the eternal servant of my guru. That is my real identity." Reading this, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura expressed much pleasure that "such a young boy wrote such nice things," and by letter had his blessings conveyed to Rādhā-ramaṇa Prabhu.

After Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's *tirobhāva,* Rādhā-ramaṇa Prabhu took *sannyāsa,* with the name Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Kumuda Santa Mahārāja.

Śrīpāda Sakhī Caraṇa Bhakti Vijaya Prabhu

Sakhī Caraṇa Rāya, an orphan who had come by foot to Calcutta from his native Jessore District, found employment at the wage of one meal a day as an errand boy for a salt merchant. Impecunious to the extent that at night he would sleep under a bridge, the lad gradually earned the trust of the merchant, who proportionately allotted greater responsibility and dividends to him; and when the business slumped, the merchant turned it over to him. Yet soon thereafter market conditions changed, and practically overnight Sakhī Caraṇa became rich.

Sakhī Caraṇa Babu first met Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura upon accompanying Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu to Māyāpur before the founding of the Gauḍīya Maṭha.* But for years he remained aloof from the mission, being influenced by the *jāta-gosāñi* Śrī Hīrālāla Goswami, a former mentor of Kuñja Bihārī's. Although Hīrālāla showed outward respect to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, he clandestinely told others not to mix closely with or take initiation from him. He would advise, "Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura is a topmost devotee. You cannot understand the deep subjects he speaks. Be honest. You are no *paramahaṁsa.* Don't be artificial. You cannot follow all his restrictions. Just be realistic and practical and perform *bhakti* in the ordinary way, like everyone else." Only after Hīrālāla's death did Sakhī Caraṇa, and many others who had been misled by him, begin freely associating with Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his followers.

Soon thereafter Sakhī Caraṇa Babu was initiated by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī as Sakhī Caraṇa dāsa, and later awarded the title Bhakti Vijaya. After initiation he delegated his commercial responsibilities to others and traveled widely with his guru. Even when in Calcutta, he spent little time with his family, but remained in the temple on the roof of his three-story home, absorbed in *bhajana,* including *pūjā* of a Govardhana-*śilā* whose worship had been personally inaugurated there by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.

Bhakti Vijaya Prabhu paid for the laying of the metalled road in Māyāpur, and when he built a superb residence for his *gurudeva* at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura reciprocated by naming it Bhakti Vijaya Bhavan. Upon being instructed by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to establish a large new temple at the Yogapīṭha in Māyāpur, Bhakti Vijaya Prabhu enthusiastically set his full energy and resources to that endeavor. Like at least two other major donors, including Jagabandhu Prabhu, he was decorated with the title Śreṣṭhyārya.*

Śrīpāda Pyārī-mohana Brahmacārī (1)

Śrīpāda Pyārī-mohana Brahmacārī was his guru-*mahārāja's* personal driver and was also accomplished in photography, in that era neither being common skills. He was awarded the title Kāru Kovid (Dexterous in Manual Work). At least once he played water games with Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura at Ālālanātha in the pond that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura saw as nondifferent from Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Ultimately he was bitten by a poisonous snake and departed this world prior to his guru-*mahārāja.*

Śrīpāda Pyārī-mohana Brahmacārī (2)

When the Śrī Mādhva Gauḍīya Maṭh shifted from a rented house to its own land in Narinda, Dacca, a fourteen-year-old boy residing in an adjacent home started spending most of his days there, attending daily functions and performing various services. Seeing his keen interest in devotional activities, Śrīmad B.V. Bhāratī Mahārāja persuaded this lad, against the wishes of his family members, to join the mission full-time. On initiation he was given the name Pyārī-mohana. As a junior godbrother young enough to be the son or grandson of Bhāratī Mahārāja, Pyārī-mohana served him better than many disciples serve their own guru—often fanning him

during the whole night, and then without resting, tending to his needs throughout the day. Like his senior namesake, this Pyārī-mohana was also a driver, and would ply the car of the Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha. After Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's passing, Pyārī-mohana took *sannyāsa* and was titled Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Śaraṇa Trivikrama Mahārāja.

Śrīpāda Kṛṣṇa Keśava Prabhu and His Father

When Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was touring by bullock cart in a rural area of Assam, a local eleven-year-old village boy followed behind, fascinated by the unwonted spectacle of this troupe of sadhus. From the carts some *brahmacārīs* baited him, "Why don't you come and join us? Do you want to live in the Maṭha?" When the lad replied seriously in the affirmative the *brahmacārīs* turned to their guru-*mahārāja* and asked what to do. "Put him on the cart," he said. "Take him to Calcutta."

On the train with devotees returning to Calcutta, the boy realized that he was now leaving home and family forever, without even having informed them, and suddenly became overwhelmed with trepidation. But just then Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura visited that coach and, placing his hand on the lad's head, assured him, "Do not be afraid of anything, for I am with you." At that moment the boy felt a surge of indomitable courage, and within his heart surrendered to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, giving up all attachment to home and family.

But his father, a nonagenarian village dignitary, was not at all happy at the sudden unapprised loss of the youngest of his ten children. Upon learning of the boy's whereabouts, he set out to retrieve him and give his son's "abductors" a dressing down. On arriving in Māyāpur he found all the devotees busy amid crowds of visitors, for Navadvīpa-dhāma Parikramā was about to commence. Beholding so many exalted sadhus and sannyasis, his anger somewhat subsided, and he was further placated by one of the leaders, who assured him that the matter of his son's "kidnapping" (as the man considered it) would be properly discussed, but not till after the Parikramā, as it was not possible sooner. He invited the paterfamilias to join the Parikramā as a guest, offering him all facilities at no expense.

That man agreed, and as an elderly gentleman and the father of a *maṭha-vāsī,* he was well attended. As hoped, during the Parikramā his mind transformed, to the degree that when he saw other attendees enlisting to receive *harināma* on Gaura-*jayantī,* he too requested the same. "But how can you take *harināma*?" the devotees posited. "Every day we see you slipping away from the group to smoke ganja." In fact, since youth this man had ingested most types of common intoxicants except alcohol. Nonetheless he unhesitatingly replied, "I'll give it up!" "How can you suddenly change a lifetime habit?" they challenged. "But I will! Let me speak with Prabhupāda."

Incredulous, the devotees introduced him to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and explained how he was requesting *harināma* although that very morning he had been seen smoking. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura asked him, "Can you give it up?" "Yes, I will stop immediately," he promised. Seeing his genuine resolve Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura consented and awarded him *harināma.*

That man became a devoted Vaiṣṇava and lived nearly thirty more years. After the founding of the Sarabhog Maṭha he enthusiastically participated in its activities. His disposition for serving Vaiṣṇavas was rewarded when Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī visited Sarabhog. To accomodate his guru during this stay, that disciple had a bamboo hut transported from his home to the site of the new Maṭha.

His son was initiated as Śrīpāda Kṛṣṇa Keśava Brahmacārī and soon became adept in multiple services. Later he traveled extensively with Śrīpāda B.R. Śrīdhara and Śrīpāda Hayagrīva Brahmacārī, and became known as a fiery lecturer who could get away with making outrageously radical statements by accompanying them with equally outrageous original humor. Although a renounced *brahmacārī* and competent preacher, out of humility Kṛṣṇa Keśava Prabhu preferred to remain in white cloth.

Whenever Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura stayed at Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha during his last years, Kṛṣṇa Keśava Prabhu helped cook and perform menial services for him. He prepared meals with astonishing celerity, and whatever he made tasted just like nectar. When the Maharaja of Tripura once visited and partook of *mahā-prasāda* prepared by Śrīpāda Kṛṣṇa Keśava Prabhu, he declared that if he could get such delicious food every day he would give up eating meat.

Śrīpāda Revatī Ramaṇa Bhakti Niścaya Prabhu

Revatī Ramaṇa Bhakti Niścaya Prabhu, known as Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's craftsman, supervised the construction of many Maṭhas. Not only was he adept in architecture, but was decorated with all good qualities, fixed in *bhajana,* energetic and supremely enthusiastic in service, exclusively devoted to the supreme truth, fearless, straightforward, and desired nothing other than pure devotional service. Although competent in many practical skills, he was yet exceedingly humble and would often inquire, “How can my heart melt and constitutional intense feelings for Kṛṣṇa arise?”

Caring naught for their learning or proficiency in Sanskrit, he would rebut any *paṇḍita* who spoke against *śuddha-bhakti-siddhānta.* Due to his ideal character and handyman's expertise, many seemingly impossible jobs got done. By his eagerness for spiritual knowledge and his irrepressible spirit for service, numerous English and Sanskrit writings of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, and Śrīmad Bhakti Pradīpa Tīrtha Mahārāja were published from Madras Gauḍīya Maṭha. Even when overseeing construction in various places, he would unceasingly perform *śravaṇa-kīrtana* and wholeheartedly endeavor for the welfare of his godbrothers.

While performing pilgrimage to Kurukṣetra in the company of other Gauḍīya Mission devotees in 1941, on the occasion of a solar eclipse, Revatī Ramaṇa Bhakti Niścaya Prabhu departed from this world.

Śrīpāda Sanātana dāsa Adhikārī

Convinced by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's powerful speeches, one man from a village near Calcutta approached him for initiation and received both *harināma* and *dīkṣā,* with the name Śrīpāda Sanātana dāsa Adhikārī. But upon returning home, he was boycotted by the local caste Hindus for having accepted brahminical initiation, in violation of caste rules. Everyone stopped eating with, visiting, or talking with him or his family. Even the barber and washerman were compelled to terminate service at his home. And although his youngest daughter was to be married within the next few days, the groom's party was hectored into withdrawing from the nuptials.

Undaunted, Śrī Sanātana brought to Calcutta all the food intended for the wedding reception and offered it to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura without relating what had happened. The Maṭha inmates were pleased to receive this abundance of fresh mangos and other delicacies, yet when Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was informed of the circumstances, he gloweringly pronounced, "Such offenders to Vaiṣṇavas should be destroyed!" Then Śrīmad Nemi Mahārāja feistily declared, "If Sanātana Prabhu's daughter is not married by the day after tomorrow I will take birth again and marry her. Such a highly qualified householder devotee as Sanātana Prabhu, with such faith in his guru, is rare in this world."

Sanātana Prabhu returned home the following day. On the day after that, he was offered a suitable match for his daughter. The marriage was conducted that very night.

Śrīpāda Raghunātha Mahāpātra

The chief attorney for the kingdom of Maharaja Rāmacandra Bangha Deo of Mayurbhanj, Śrī Raghunātha Mahāpātra, was an opium addict, consuming one *barhi* (about one-third of an ounce) every day. The amount of pan he chewed was immeasurable—he always had some in his mouth—and the walls inside his house were red from the spittings. But when his village was graced by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's discourses, Raghunātha Mahāpātra became attracted and requested *harināma.* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī agreed, provided that Raghunātha give up all intoxicants and other vices. Despite his long-standing addiction, Raghunātha Mahāpātra immediately stopped. After a few days he became horribly sick, with saliva pouring out from his mouth, yet still he promised, "Never again will I indulge in such things."

Later Śrī Raghunātha Mahāpātra was appointed editor of *Paramārthī,* the Gauḍīya Maṭha's Oriya magazine.

Śrīpāda Paramapada Prabhu

The son of Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Adhikārī Kavirāja and Śrīmati Kaiśorī Sundarī dāsī, both disciples of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, received *harināma* at age eight and *dīkṣā* at eleven. When initiating him as Paramapada dāsa, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura quoted:

nāma bhaja, nāma cinta, nāma kara sāra
ananta kṛṣṇera nāma mahimā apāra

Worship the holy name, remember the holy name, make the name the essence of your life. Kṛṣṇa's names are innumerable and their glories unlimited."[22]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura advised Paramapada Prabhu to enroll in Parā-vidyā-pīṭha to learn Sanskrit as an aid for understanding scripture, and engaged him in washing the deities' plates and in other menial services.

Once a careworn impoverished couple left their home in Midnapore District with their two sons and daughter to surrender to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. From Navadvīpa train station they continued on foot in the midday summer heat until finally collapsing under a tree near the Yogapīṭha. The father began to weep, lamenting that although they had come so far, they were now unable to traverse the remaining distance to meet their savior. Somehow sensing the family's dolor, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura sent Paramapada Prabhu to coordinate their transportation to the Maṭha. They became amazed, considering Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura like a god for having responded to their plight when no one else was aware of it. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura initiated both of them, naming the husband Vanamālī dāsa, and arranged for the entire family to reside in Māyāpur. Vanamālī Prabhu and his wife were engaged in the Maṭha cowshed.

Once Paramapada Prabhu was carrying ten large books for Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī from the Ekāyana Maṭha library to Āāyāpur. Having eaten nothing all day, he became exhausted and was despairing of completing the journey. Just then a man on a bullock cart approached and offered him a ride. When Paramapada Prabhu finally returned that evening, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī asked if he had taken *mahā-prasāda,* to which he admitted no. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī then arranged that some flat-rice be prepared and told him, "Kṛṣṇa always rescues His devotees from danger."

When Paramapada's parents became old, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura instructed him to serve them till the end of their lives, and also said that he was highly fortunate to have such exalted parents. Placing his hand on Paramapada's head, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura advised him to remain always fearless.

Śrīpāda Brahmaṇya-deva Prabhu

A man came to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī claiming to have been his disciple in a previous life but then reincarnated as a *brahma-rākṣasa* in punishment for having kicked a woman devotee. Although now freed from that sinful reaction and again possessing a human body, he could not find and beg forgiveness from the devotee he had offended, so was requesting Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī to excuse him on her behalf. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī did so and initiated him as Brahmaṇya-deva dāsa, who became an exemplary and learned devotee.

Śrīpāda Gaurendu Prabhu

Although the Gauḍīya Maṭha was known as a nonpolitical organization, the growing number of former independence activists joining it prompted the British to send undercover agents to collect information on its activities and objectives. One of these agents was listening intently for anything suspicious in Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's lectures, yet by hearing so attentively he gradually developed faith and became convinced of the transcendental message. At that point he disclosed that he had come as a spy, and begged Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's mercy. He quit his profession to become a *maṭha-vāsī* and was initiated as Śrī Gaurendu Brahmacārī.

Śrīpāda Sadānanda Prabhu

Born in 1908 and graduating in 1928, Herr Ernst Georg Schulze pursued post-graduate studies in comparative religion and philosophy at the University of Leipzig and University of Berlin, his main orientation being toward Buddhism. To peruse ancient texts in the original, he acquired proficiency in Latin, Hebrew, Greek, Pali, Sanskrit, Tibetan, Classical Chinese, and Japanese. However, due to his verbal and physical defence of German Jewish scholars, his promising career was scotched by the Third Reich.

Herr Schulze was preparing to flee to Japan when he received as a gift from friends in London a copy of *Sree Krishna Chaitanya.* Finding that his search through various religions, doctrines, and thought-systems of the world was consummated in the teachings of Lord Caitanya, he understood the necessity to dedicate his life for attaining the goal thereof. For this purpose he contacted the author of the book (Professor Sanyal) and the author's teacher, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, who advised Herr Schulze to first associate with devotees in London to prepare himself for residing in India. Accordingly, in 1933 he joined the devotees in London, where he assisted B.P. Tīrtha in translating *Bhagavad-gītā* into English. He also joined Śrīmad Bon Mahārāja on his lecture tour of the Continent. Soon he received *harināma* via Śrīmad Bon Mahārāja, his *japa* beads having been sent by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī along with this initiate's new name, Sadānanda dāsa.

In 1935 Sadānanda Prabhu sailed to India with Śrīmad Bon Mahārāja. He was so serious to imbibe *bhakti-siddhānta* that he regularly studied all night. His public lectures in English on Vaiṣṇava dharma were received with astonishment and delight. He also regularly contributed scholarly articles to the *Harmonist.*

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī once amazed both Sadānanda Prabhu and the many other devotees present by stating, “Sadānanda, you and I have been together throughout eternity.”

After Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's departure, Sadānanda remained until 1961 in India, where during World War II he was interned in a concentration camp. Shortly after the war he took *sannyāsa,* and together with Vāmana Prabhu, an Austrian disciple of Śrīmad Bon

Mahārāja, Sadānanda Svāmī published a book in German about Lord Caitanya.[*]

Other Western Disciples

On 1 October 1933, Mr. Arnold Corbluth, a student of London University, who for some time had been residing with and hearing Bhaktisiddhānta-*vāṇī* from the Gauḍīya preachers in London, received *harināma*.[†] Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had sent *tulasī* chanting beads and neckbeads, and the *mahā-mantra* written on paper. On behalf of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, Śrīmad Tīrtha Mahārāja presented the chanting beads to Corbluth, tied the other beads round his neck, read aloud the *mantra* to him, and told him his new name, given by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura: Kṛṣṇa dāsa.

Another Westerner who accepted *harināma* was Mrs. Hilda Korbel, an elderly woman.[23 ‡]

Śrīpāda Rūpa Vilāsa Brahmacārī

The villagers of Rudaghara, Khulna District, once hosted a thirty-man Gauḍīya Maṭha deputation led by Śrīmad Bhakti Pradīpa Tīrtha Mahārāja and other sannyasis. Present in the crowds at their three-day function was Śrī Rūpalāla Haldar, a local student who from childhood had been much attached to the *Bhagavad-gītā* and other *śāstras*. Later Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura himself accompanied a preaching party to Rudaghara, yet by that time Rūpalāla had received his B.A. and was residing in Gayā at the residence of his elder brother, conducting private tuition.

In April 1935, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura conducted a series of public lectures in Gayā. It being Rūpalāla's habit to visit sadhus, he attended the first program that evening and afterward followed Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to his quarters, where he continued hearing Hari-*kathā* till eleven o'clock. Next morning he was back again when Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura spoke at length to a local pleader. That evening more speeches followed, and on the following morning Rūpalāla took members of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's party on a tour of prominent religious sites in the area.

While Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was in Gayā, from 19 April to 3 May, Rūpalāla stopped seeing other sadhus, and ceased all other activities to remain close to him and his associates. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī liberally gave time to this inquisitive young man and answered his many questions.

Although impressed by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, Rūpalāla was not very submissive, and his repeated challenges developed into a verbal war, culminating in contention over verse 9.23 of the *Gītā*:

ye 'py anya-devatā-bhaktā yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ
te 'pi mām eva kaunteya yajanty avidhi-pūrvakam

> O son of Kuntī, those who are devotees of other gods and worship them with faith actually worship only Me, but against the direction of *śāstra.*

Rūpalāla was fond of this verse and would often cite it to claim that demigod worship is equivalent to worshiping Kṛṣṇa. Yet he had not deliberated on its last clause, *yajanty avidhi-pūrvakam,* regarding the improperness of demigod worship, which Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura explained with a cannonade of *śāstrīya* evidence. More than two hours later, from behind Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's chair his attendant disciples gesticulated to Rūpalāla, who was sitting at Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's feet, to end the conversation so they could serve their guru-*mahārāja's* meal. Rūpalāla ignored them and continued drinking the nectar of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's words. By the power of those discussions, not only was Rūpalāla convinced of the Gauḍīya message, but he also learned to treasure *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* together with his lifelong favorite, *Bhāgavad-gītā.*

When Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī left for Vṛndāvana, Rūpalāla continued to associate with the devotees newly stationed in Gayā. On 13 November of that year, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī returned with a large group of disciples, and in a grand festival installed deities of Śrī Gaurāṅga and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda. He also bestowed *harināma* and *pāñcarātrikī dīkṣā* to one person—Rūpalāla—renaming him Rūpa Vilāsa Brahmacārī and instructing him to serve the Gayā Maṭha.

Following that order, Rūpa Vilāsa Prabhu moved into the Maṭha and accepted *brahmacārī* life in all seriousness, remaining constantly engaged and utilizing any spare time in his new-found love for *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Notwithstanding his educational background, he willingly performed menial services and never allowed others to serve him. He hated uncleanliness, and undertook all kinds of cleaning services to keep the Maṭha always spick-and-span. And from only brief association with his guru-*mahārāja,* he imbibed an enduring habit to incessantly speak Hari-*kathā.*

At the end of that year Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura personally requested Rūpa Vilāsa Prabhu to assist him with the upcoming Sat-śikṣā Pradarśanī during Ardha Kumbha-melā at Prayāga. There Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura kept this new recruit by his side, instructed him to preach Hari-*kathā,* and posted him in charge of the Gayā Maṭha. In April of 1936 he again sent for Rūpa Vilāsa Brahmacārī to be with him, for a fifteen-day stay in Vṛndāvana, and in November called him to Purī.

In 1965 Rūpa Vilāsa Prabhu accepted *sannyāsa,* receiving the name Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Śrīrūpa Bhāgavata Mahārāja.

Śrīpāda Saṅkīrtana Prabhu

In 1936 Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī resolved to establish a center in Darjeeling. The devotees had rented the prestigious Laj Sahadeva Kuṭīra, the former summer home of the governor, owned by Indirā-devī, the mother of the Maharaja of Coochbihar. However, being

Bengalis who found it difficult to tolerate the cold, no disciples wanted to remain at the new outpost. So Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī himself journeyed there, bringing ten or fifteen devotees with him. Among them Saṅkīrtana dāsa, so named for his proficiency in *kīrtana,* was the most junior.

During his two-week stay Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī revealed service to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa deities, yet despite his request for volunteers, no one wanted to remain and serve Them. Finally he said, "Whomever I first see tomorrow morning will have to stay."

The next day no one went to see Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, not even to serve him.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's disciple Pūrṇa Babu, who was the Darjeeling postmaster, had personally been delivering letters daily from Maṭhas and disciples all over India. But on that day he too did not go to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, fearing being ordered to quit his job and family to take charge of the Maṭha. He left the mail with the devotees and quickly departed.

Senior devotees instructed Saṅkīrtana Prabhu to take the mail directly to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, which he gladly did. He entered his guru's room, placed the mail on the table, and offered *daṇḍavat.* Then he submitted, "All your disciples have taken shelter of you to become free from their faults. I have been serving you with the same desire, yet find that all bad things persist within me. Are you not bestowing mercy upon me?" He waited for several minutes for a reply, but Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura just stood facing him. Saṅkīrtana Prabhu offered *daṇḍavat* again and left. Thenceforth, during evening lectures Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would call Saṅkīrtana Prabhu to sit close to him.

Since Saṅkīrtana Prabhu had been the first to see his spiritual master that day, he had to stay in Darjeeling despite being a householder with dependent children. Nor did Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī ever ask Saṅkīrtana Prabhu what would become of his family, who simply had to accept his having joined the Maṭha. Some older men from other Maṭhas were sent to assist him; and Saṅkīrtana Prabhu remained there for three years.[24]

Śrīpāda Narasiṁha Brahmacārī

Narasiṁha, a boy from Berhampur, Orissa, had developed an interest in Ayurveda and was studying from a local expert, Śrī Madhusūdana Sharma, who along with his wife was initiated by Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.[*] Daily after perusing medical texts, Sharma spent some time cultivating Narasiṁha's proclivity for spiritual topics. Together they read from and discussed *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other pristine *śāstras,* as well as modern manifestations thereof in the form of articles in *Gauḍīya* and *Nadia Prakash.* Approximately every six months Sharma took Narasiṁha to visit Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in Māyāpur, Cuttack, and other places. After several years of seeing Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in this way, in 1931 or '32 one Śrīmat Purī Mahārāja visiting Berhampur insisted that since Narasiṁha was from a Vaiṣṇava family he should take *harināma:* "Next time I come I will bring for you a *japa-mālā* chanted on by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura." But it was rather in Māyāpur on 3 August 1936, the *āvirbhāva-tithi* of Lord

Balarāma, that Narasiṁha received *harināma.*

Being a junior in the presence of many elders, Narasiṁha never had an opportunity to speak with Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. Nor did he intend to join the Maṭha, being more interested in Gandhi's independence movement.

Back in his home area, taking encouragement and help from Śrī Madhusūdana Sharma, he opened an Ayurvedic charitable dispensary and soon became reputed for his knowledge of and proficiency in both Ayurveda and devotional scriptures.

After Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's *tirobhāva,* Narasiṁha Prabhu took *sannyāsa,* being renamed Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Vaibhava Purī Mahārāja.

Six

Other Associates

Mocha Singh

Although Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura fully depended on Kṛṣṇa and was willing to accept whatever fate was ordained for him, his disciples yet felt that because he was a serious preacher with serious opposition, he required a bodyguard. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was not about to stop attacking his opponents with compelling arguments based on the truth of scriptural conclusions. Nor were those haters of the truth likely to cease counterattacking with wrested interpretations of scripture, invectives, outright lies, or occasional violence or death threats. Hence for some time one Mocha Singh was appointed by Kuñja Bihārī Prabhu as the paid bodyguard of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, to accompany him at all times. During public appearances, Mocha Singh would stand close to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, dressed elegantly and with a gun-in-holster. He was tall and muscular, and would consume about thirty chapatis every evening.

Śrī Gopāla-candra Praharārāja

Śrī Gopāla Praharārāja was an advocate who had compiled an elaborate seven-volume dictionary (still famous today) of the Oriya language. He invited Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī to his residence to bless his family, home, and lexicographic endeavors. Although not prepared to take initiation, in his dictionary he included a six-page life sketch of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and the history of Māyāpur, and a photograph of himself with Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, which was later featured in the *Gauḍīya*.[*]

Acyutānanda

Born in 1860, Śrī Annadā Prasāda was Śrī Bimalā Prasāda's eldest brother and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's only son by his first wife, who died when Annadā Prasāda was only ten months old. At birth his nose was decorated with a conspicuous *tilaka* mark, which gradually faded away as he grew up. Known also as Acyutānanda, or simply Acyuta, he was married at eighteen and begot three daughters and a son. By nature he was open-hearted and kind.

After graduation Acyuta took up government service. But in 1884, at age twenty-four, he became mentally imbalanced and unable to function normally. Although throughout his life he had never shown interest in *bhajana,* after becoming insane he sometimes liked to chant *hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare* and *hare murāre madhu-kaiṭabhāre.*[*]

In 1895 Acyuta remained very weak after a bout of flu. Gradually his condition worsened, and neither allopathic nor Ayurvedic treatment helped. After he had passed a week in a near-coma the end seemed nigh; so his brothers and sisters gathered round him. As Acyuta's siblings began to sing most sweetly the *mahā-mantra,* the morbid atmosphere of impending death transformed into blissful Vaikuṇṭha. Although he had been refusing to eat or drink anything, toward dawn Acyuta accepted from his stepmother a little *caraṇāmṛta* of the household Govardhana-*śilā,* along with Vṛndāvana dust, Jagannātha *prasāda,* and *prasāda tulasī* leaves. Then an effulgence appeared about his navel and spread up to his throat. Without difficulty he began chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra,* while a thick flow of tears issued from his closed eyes and Vaiṣṇava *tilaka* appeared on his forehead, arms, stomach, chest, and throat.

Haltingly, Acyuta spoke of being acquainted in a previous life with his fourth brother, Bimalā Prasāda (who was present there) and elaborated his glories. Simultaneously, numerous pure Vaiṣṇavas manifested their presence in spiritual forms, all decorated with *tilaka* and holding *japa-mālās.* Their combined luster far outshone the oil lamps burning in the room. Acyuta then revealed:

> In my previous birth as a Śrī Vaiṣṇava I spoke against Gauḍīya philosophical teachings. To clear that offense I took birth in this house. The essence of all spiritual practice is *harināma;* the holy name is nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa Himself. Those who chant the holy name without offense will achieve all perfection. O my dear brothers, hearing the holy name chanted offenselessly by you, I have been freed from my offense and have achieved perfection. Remember my words.

Acyuta next expressed his desire to see the Lord's form. As soon as a picture of Lord Caitanya was brought before him he again burst into tears, and gazed fixedly on the beautiful figure of Mahāprabhu. On his forehead appeared a sign of Śrī Vaiṣṇava *tilaka,* which gradually transformed into Gauḍīya *tilaka* and finally a representation of *oṁkāra,* which moved to the top of his forehead and stayed there briefly before his life-air departed and other symptoms of death

manifested.

Although Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was not among those present, he later commented that because Acyuta had left this plane at an auspicious time, in the manner of a yogi, and in the presence of pure devotees chanting the holy names, and had passed so many years like a sense enjoyer and madman to requite his offenses to Vaiṣṇavas, he must have attained a kind of transcendental, Vaiṣṇava destination.[*]

Śrī Vaṁśīdāsa Bābājī

Śrīla Vaṁśīdāsa Bābājī Mahārāja lived in Kuliyā in a ramshackle hut on the bank of the Gaṅgā. Although physically present in this world, he had little connection with it. He always spoke to his deities Śrī Gaura-Nityānanda, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda, and Bāla Gopāla and hardly seemed to recognize the existence of anyone else. He was about six feet tall and strongly built. His hair and beard were uncut, matted, and disheveled. He almost never bathed, and his eyes looked wild. He wore only a *kaupīna* and nothing more.

At some point Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī heard of the exalted position of Bābājī Mahārāja, and in 1903 first received his *darśana* in Navadvīpa. Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī and Bābājī Mahārāja had natural affinity for each other. Bābājī Mahārāja referred to Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī as Jagannāther (Jagannātha's) Bimalā because his childhood name was Bimalā Prasāda: "the son born as the mercy of Bimalā-devī (who resides within Jagannātha's temple in Purī)."

In later years Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī sometimes crossed the river from Māyāpur to visit Bābājī Mahārāja in Kuliyā. Seeing him coming Vaṁśīdāsa would exclaim, "Oh, a *mañjarī* has come, so won't Rādhā also come? She will come! She will come!" He was referring to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's eternal spiritual identity as a *mañjarī*.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī warned his disciples that when going for *darśana* of Bābājī Mahārāja, they should just sit silently and not misunderstand his wild appearance and eccentric behavior, lest they commit offenses. He himself offered *daṇḍavat* to Bābājī Mahārāja only from a distance.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura arranged that firewood and other provisions be sent to Vaṁśīdāsa. Each day different *brahmacārīs* would go by cycle and ferryboat to Navadvīpa. Sometimes Bābājī Mahārāja welcomed them, sometimes accepted the gifts without saying a word, sometimes just sat and stared, and on occasion angrily threw the offerings into the river or shouted at the devotees, "Who are you? Do you think you are bringing these things for me? My *prabhu* will send!"*

Once, upon observing the first ripened jackfruit of the season, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura told the Caitanya Maṭha *pūjārī* to offer it to the deity and then bring it to Vaṁśīdāsa. Some hours later the *pūjārī* came to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and related that Vaṁśīdāsa had grabbed a bamboo rod and chased him, accusing him in rough language of having eaten some of the fruit before offering the rest to the deity. When Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura asked if the charge was true, the *pūjārī* admitted his fault. On another occasion Bābājī Mahārāja reacted similarly, again revealing a secret offense of having first eaten food to be offered to Kṛṣṇa.

When Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura heard that some Gauḍīya Maṭha *brahmacārīs* were speaking badly of Bābājī Mahārāja, he chastised them for not apprehending Vaṁśīdāsa's transcendental

position, and thenceforth prohibited his disciples from going to see him.[†]

Śrīmad Bhakti Vilāsa Ṭhākura

Raised as the eldest of five sons of Śrī Prāṇa Kṛṣṇa Ghoṣa, a rigid Vaiṣṇava from the remote village of Āmalājoḍā, Burdwan District, Śrī Lalit Lāl Ghoṣa never in his life touched meat, fish, tobacco or any other such dirty thing. In the beginning Lalit followed his father in practicing Vaiṣṇava dharma, but never received clear instruction in *śuddha-bhakti.* Considering the ingloriousness of what was then passing as Hinduism, of which he considered Vaiṣṇava dharma a mere branch, and being particularly put off by what he considered idolatry, he adopted Brahmo-dharma after hearing a lecture extolling it. His father never commented on Lalit's religious choice, yet was obviously pained by it, discerning which Lalit also felt pain.

Lalit Babu's mind changed in 1880 when Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura performed night-long *saṅkīrtana* one Ekādaśī in Āmalājoḍā and established a Prapannāśrama there. Impressed by the preaching and behavior of these Vaiṣṇava saints, he started reading Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's books and soon became convinced to reenter the Vaiṣṇava fold, this time with meaningful guidance and conviction based on understanding the position of *śuddha* Vaiṣṇava dharma in comparison to ordinary Hinduism and the despicable antics of *prākṛta-sahajiyās.* Thinking how to mitigate his offenses to his sire, he composed "Śrī Śrī Mahāprabhura Smaraṇa Maṅgala Stotram," a Bengali work inspired by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's Sanskrit "Śrī Śrī Gaurāṅga Smaraṇa Maṅgala Stotram," and presented it to his father.

After many years of committed *bhajana* at home, in 1912 at age sixty-eight Lalit Babu set out on the first pilgrimage of his life. The following year the transcendental opulence of Śrīvāsa Aṅgana was revealed to him in a dream, along with an order to inaugurate and undertake service there. Accordingly he journeyed to Śrīdhāma Māyāpur, bringing his wife and several other family members. But he was in for a shock:

> My heart became pierced upon seeing the delapidation of Śrīvāsa Aṅgana, which is nondifferent from the Rāsa-sthalī of Vṛndāvana. Even today the eternal *kīrtana-līlā* of Śrīman Mahāprabhu continues there, which the demigods come to see and hear. Yet now it is rundown and simply a place where animals evacuate. What could be worse than this?

After taking his relatives back home, he swiftly returned alone to Māyāpur, gave money to Paramānanda Prabhu to erect an enclosure around Śrīvāsa Aṅgana, and again went home. But he knew that he would never find peace as long as Śrīvāsa Aṅgana was not properly served, and thus resolved to dedicate his remaining days to executing the dream-order.

He began weekly devotional meetings in his village, but there were few attendees, those too mostly illiterates. Day and night he wondered what he could do to uplift the condition of Śrīvāsa Aṅgana. Then in a dream he heard, "Write on Gaura-*līlā,* contemplate Gaura-*līlā,* and glorify and propagate Gaura-*līlā.* Then the desire in your heart will be fulfilled."

Lalit Babu happily accepted this order, but considering that he would not become fully purified

if he remained in household life, he decided to quit it. He sensed an overpowering sentiment pulling him to Śrīvāsa Aṅgana. Thus he resolved to go to Māyāpur, worship Mahāprabhu there, and pray to Him for restoring Śrīvāsa Aṅgana. By correspondence he informed Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī of his plan and received the reply "Come to Māyāpur and perform *bhajana.* Your innermost wishes will be realized."

Consequently Lalit Babu, now seventy, took up residence and *bhajana* at the Yogapīṭha, meditating on three great aspirations: to restore Śrīvāsa Aṅgana, excavate Gaura-kuṇḍa, and revive Navadvīpa-dhāma Parikramā. Śrīman Mahāprabhu reciprocated by inspiring the Navadvīpa-dhāma-pracāriṇī Sabhā to induct Lalit as a member and give him responsibility and full support for the new Sabhā project of furbishing Śrīvāsa Aṅgana. Now titled by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura as Śrīpāda Bhakti Vilāsa Ṭhākura, despite failing eyesight and shaky health he issued handbills and wrote innumerable hortatory letters, to everyone he knew, urging them to contribute for this cause. By his persistence, eventually sufficient funds were raised for construction of a simple thatched-roof temple at Śrīvāsa Aṅgana.

From the opening of the temple in 1913, on Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's order Śrī Bhakti Vilāsa Ṭhākura served the newly installed Pañca-tattva deities, continuing in this service until his passing in 1927. Accepting *kṣetra-sannyāsa,* he never left Śrīvāsa Aṅgana, not even for a day, nor ever expressed a desire to go anywhere else.[*] By beseeching pilgrims for donations, he gradually developed a small complex of buildings and gardens there.

His other two aspirations were also effected, for within his lifetime Gaura-kuṇḍa was excavated and Navadvīpa-dhāma Parikramā revived.

During the final portion of his life, Śrīpāda Bhakti Vilāsa Ṭhākura wrote several books that, although not highly scholarly, conveyed Vaiṣṇava teachings with simplicity and conviction. Some of those volumes were edited by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura or stalwart disciples and published by the Gauḍīya Maṭha.

Both of Śrīpāda Bhakti Vilāsa Ṭhākura's sons, and the eldest of his three daughters, were initiated by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.

Svarṇa Didi

Circa 1921, at approximately age sixty, "Svarṇa Didi" left her home in Barisal District and took up residence at the Yogapīṭha (where she remained until her demise, almost twenty years later).[*] After the departure of her *dīkṣā*-guru, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, she accepted as her *śikṣā*-guru Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, considering that she had been entrusted to his care by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. She would listen to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's Hari-*kathā* with an unusual degree of absorption. Her natural, simple, and intense humility melted the hearts of all genuine devotees. By referring to her ideal attitude, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would often correct the mentality of persons whom he considered had come to enjoy the *dhāma.*

Svarṇa Didi would sit in the Yogapīṭha temple guarding the donation box. After losing her eyesight, she continued performing service and *bhajana,* daily attending *ārati* and performing *parikramā* of the temple even when ill, tying a knot in her sari to count each time she circumambulated. When she became too old to move about, she would participate in *ārati* by sitting in her room and beating a small gong in time with the *kīrtana.* Even in that condition she shunned personal service offered by others. She was always seen chanting on beads, and daily she would enthusiastically relish recitation of *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata.*

When a gentleman from Tripura approached Śrī Vaṁśīdāsa Bābājī at his hut in Navadvīpa and begged for his mercy, Bābājī Mahārāja responded, "Why have you come here? Go to Māyāpur. Living near the temple there is an elderly devotee lady called Svarṇa. In your previous birth you committed an offense to her lotus feet. Until she forgives you there can be no auspiciousness in your life." That gentlemen did as directed, upon which Svarṇa Didi exhibited unprecedented humility and anger.

As stated in her obituary, "Even though in the form of a woman, by her determination to reside until death in Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's dearest place, Śrī Māyāpur, taking exclusive shelter of the holy names, she has become the ideal for all female devotees."[1]

Part Five:
His Contributions Reviewed

One

Overview

A pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa cannot be understood merely by listing his achievements. His very existence is axiomatically outstanding, because he loves Kṛṣṇa. Nondevotees eulogize celebrities in politics, business, entertainment, social service, warfare, scholastics, and art. But if conducted without Kṛṣṇa consciousness, all such activities are no more significant than straw. Thus a pure devotee far outclasses even the greatest of great persons in this ephemeral world.

Even the apparently ordinary activities of a pure devotee, such as bathing and eating, bestow immeasurable benediction on the entire universe. Simply by his presence a *mahā-bhāgavata* sanctifies countless conditioned souls. And what can be said of those special devotees who preach the message of Kṛṣṇa, who struggle within the material atmosphere to convince the fettered souls to again turn their face toward Him? Kṛṣṇa imbues such emissaries with divine ability to perform otherwise impossible tasks.

Just as Hanumān was empowered by Lord Rāma to jump over the sea or as Arjuna was empowered by Lord Kṛṣṇa to triumph at Kurukṣetra, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was empowered by Lord Caitanya to vigorously preach and thereby establish His message in this world. Like his beloved Mahāprabhu, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī exhibited extraordinary scholastic talents in youth but renounced materialistic academic pursuits to absorb himself in the real mission for which he had come—practicing and preaching *śuddha-bhakti.*

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's mission is encapsulated in his own statement *prāṇa āche tāṅra sei hetu pracāra:* "One who has life can preach."[1] He was the first Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* to preach widely since the days of Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, Śyāmānanda Paṇḍita, Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, and their immediate disciples, roughly 250 years prior. His method emulated that of Nityānanda Prabhu, the prototypal Gauḍīya preacher:

> *prema-pracāraṇa āra pāṣaṇḍa-dalana*
> *dui-kārye avadhūta karena bhramaṇa*
>
> Lord Nityānanda toured for two purposes: to preach *prema-bhakti* and to subdue atheists. (Cc 3.3.149)

Much of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's didactic efforts were focused on malpractices and discrepancies clouding the genuine path of *śuddha-bhakti.* In an era when in the name of Vaiṣṇava dharma many persons flouted scriptural rules, he reestablished sanity and order in Vaiṣṇava society by insisting that devotees know and practice the injunctions of *śāstra.* He particularly delineated *sambandha-jñāna* in considerable detail and with unprecedented philosophical insights. Above all, his *dṛg-dṛśya-vicāra* was wholly against the current of the world, exposing all putative religions as not alternatives to, but merely permutations of, the

same contamination that constituted the essence of materialism, namely, the desire to enjoy independently from Kṛṣṇa. Indubitably his inner purpose was *prema-pracāraṇa,* communicating the apex of love of Godhead as manifest in *mādhurya-rasa,* about which he revealed various esoteric truths. Nonetheless, perceiving the rampant tendency to misconstrue Kṛṣṇa-*prema,* especially *mādhurya-rasa,* he was necessarily largely engaged in *pāṣaṇḍa-dalana,* the subduing of atheists and demons by the method of defeating *apa-siddhānta,* and promoted Kṛṣṇa-*prema* only with great caution, for promotion of *prema* without first dispersing erroneous speculations would likely result in yet further *prākṛta-sahajiyā* degradation. Thus his boldness, zeal, and liberality in widely spreading *śuddha-bhakti* was tempered with distinct guardedness in revealing its highest aspects.

Encountering a world more full of misconceptions and decadence than ever before, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was determined to fight back—and did so with unparalleled combative spirit. No previous Gauḍīya *ācārya* had been so aggressive in attacking the enemies of devotion. He roundly protested anything offensive to Kṛṣṇa and was particularly strong against Māyāvādīs, empiric scholars, and misrepresentatives of Vaiṣṇava dharma. He fervidly condemned everything short of unmotivated devotional service. Fearless and outspoken, he inevitably invited hostility, yet was never deterred by adversaries. Propelled by divine afflatus, he went on speaking powerfully throughout his life, not caring for outside objections or even his own disciples' dissatisfaction. Maintaining full faith in Kṛṣṇa, he never stepped back an inch, not even when facing threats on his life. Like the previous trail-blazing Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* Śrī Madhva and Śrī Rāmānuja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī fought so vigorously to declare the supremacy of Kṛṣṇa against opposition so envious, that his life was constantly endangered. Such a forceful approach was required to redefine the predominant understanding of spirituality —by establishing that the essence of saintliness was not blasī from the world, but commitment to propagating, through practice and precept, utter servitude to the Supreme Absolute Truth.

Although a proponent of the absolute truth as revealed in ancient scriptures, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was not a traditionalist as generally considered, and while tuned into contemporary life, neither was he a modernist. Nor was he a straddler of both worlds, but a *sāragrāhī.* He presented the absolute truth at the heart of traditional teachings, and adopted from current practices whatever could be utilized for delivering that truth. He cut at all else extraneous to the truth, including not only neoteric forms of agnosticism but also hallowed beliefs, customs, and superstitions identified as traditional yet subtly or manifestly opposed to ultimate truth. Decried as an enemy of orthodoxy, and indeed resolutely pitted against socially accepted forms of institutionalized deviation from *śuddha-bhakti,* he was yet the only truly orthodox proponent of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma in that era.

His orthodoxy in adhering to the essence of *bhakti*-dharma did not inhibit him from presenting it more innovatively than had any previous *ācārya.* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī did many things that no *ācārya* had done before, knowing that for Kṛṣṇa consciousness to affect current civilization, preachers would have to move with the times. He discovered previously unimagined meaning in Rūpa Gosvāmī's principle of *yukta-vairāgya.* Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī had

discerned Lord Caitanya's *mano-'bhīṣṭa*—that *śuddha-bhakti* be spread to every town and village—and as the leader of Mahāprabhu's followers, was fully committed to helping fulfil that desire.[*] Now Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, an empowered ambassador of Lord Caitanya and the *rūpānuga ācāryas,* practically undertook that work and actualized their mission. Within eighteen years he inaugurated over sixty Gauḍīya Maṭhas and preaching centers. Through the grace of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, he applied the import of *yukta-vairāgya* to its fullest extent, by using the best commodities of this world for preaching—even to kings, and even overseas.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was always thinking of novel ways to distribute the message of Kṛṣṇa. His theistic exhibitions, *parikramās,* and use of the printing press and radio demonstrated his urge to quickly, widely, and effectively deliver *śuddha-bhakti.* And his originality brought success, for ultimately he propagated Gaura-*vāṇī* more widely than any previous *ācārya.*

Although idealism and pragmatism rarely coalesce, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was able to combine the grassroots preaching of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura with the spirit of detachment and austerity of Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī. By bringing meaningful discipline and verve to the Gauḍīya *sampradāya,* which otherwise was languishing under the influence of *prākṛta-sahajiyā* dissipation on one side and *smārta* formalism on the other, he manifested a mission at once relevant to the world while patently distinct from it. Despite his sternness and uncompromising nature, he attracted thousands of followers and trained them in devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. He transformed lives and infused them with love of Kṛṣṇa. At a time when there were few such societies, he was the founder and helmsman of a dynamic spiritual movement preaching actively all over India and beyond. Being the first major Vaiṣṇava outreach organization in centuries, it astounded the people of India with its freshness, dash, and sophistication. Yet they were astounded even more by its leader, for Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was a true *ācārya* in the mold of such luminaries as Rāmānuja and Madhva. Indeed his status outshone that of many great *ācāryas* dear to the Lord.

About Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, His associate Śrī Bāsu Ghoṣa had proclaimed:

yadi gaura na haita, tabe ki haita,
kemane dharitām de
rādhāra mahimā, prema-rasa-sīmā,
jagate jānāta ke?

> Had Gaura not appeared, how could we have sustained our lives? Who but He could have informed the universe of the glories of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, which are the ultimate limit of nectarean loving exchanges?

madhura vṛndā- vipina-mādhurī
praveśa cāturī sāra
varaja-yuvatira bhāvera-bhakati
śakati haita kāra?

> Without His grace, who could know the devotional path that gives entrance into the transcendental realm of ambrosial ecstasy in the groves of Vṛndāvana? Who could attain the mood of the topmost devotional ecstasy of the damsels of Vraja?[2]

And just as only Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu could reveal the intricacies and heights of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa-*līlā,* only an exceptional devotee of Mahāprabhu can preserve and expand throughout the world the gifts He gave. Thus Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's glories surpass even those of luminary *ācāryas* of other *sampradāyas,* who although worshipable and immeasurably praiseworthy, were yet not emissaries of Vraja-*līlā.* This truth is incomprehensible by discussion or argument, but understandable only to recipients of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's gifts, as received through his *vāṇī.*

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura never tired of talking about Kṛṣṇa. His lectures were frequent and long. He was ever eager to commune with intellectuals, religious leaders, and other prominent people, and he met with nearly all who were well known at that time in Bengal—not for the sake of exchanging social niceties, but desiring to impress upon them the superlative position of Lord Caitanya's doctrine. In debate he was unassailable, well earning a reputation for demolishing false logic. Despite speaking to innumerable reputed scholars, he was never overmatched or obliged to conciliate. He incessantly pressed the same point to all: full surrender to Kṛṣṇa.

Most Bengali Vaiṣṇava orators spoke in a superficially charming manner to lure similarly capricious followers, but Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī denounced such hypocritical speakers and their noncommittal adherents, and preached not to mollify the material attachments of hearers, but to wrench them out of their complacency and bring a sea-change in their lives—or at least jolt them to reflect on his message.

Despite his incomparable ability and enthusiasm for speaking about Kṛṣṇa, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura considered writing and publishing books an even more vital means of communicating and enlightening. From childhood he was constantly writing. His major literary contributions were: commentaries on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata,* and various other shorter works; authoring several original booklets and over three hundred essays, many redacted from his lectures; editing numerous books by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura; printing many writings of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, of previous *ācāryas* of all four Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas,* and certain of his disciples; and establishing five presses for publishing magazines, journals, and even a daily newspaper.

As a genuine and empowered *ācārya,* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura continually traveled, wrote profusely, established temples, preached, and initiated disciples. He met with the top strata of society, invariably impressing upon them the urgent need for *śuddha-bhakti.* Yet his mission was not restricted to any section of society, as he envisioned spreading the *saṅkīrtana* movement throughout the universe to all *jīvas* in all species of life. By sending his representatives to the heart of the unassailable British Empire, thereby attacking *māyā* in her most fortified and vital bastion, he demonstrated both visionary genius and the irrepressible

derring-do and ambition of a true soldier.

Always teaching by example, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was strict and austere, consistently shunning the material comforts his disciples were always ready to offer. He was ever callous to the external world, yet unlimitedly kind to those incarcerated within it. His pleasure was in chanting the holy names and in undergoing all troubles to induce others to chant.

As a social reformer, he opposed the adventitious caste system of the day, instead promoting the pristine alternative of *daiva-varṇāśrama-dharma.* He declared the essence of brahminical quality to be not birth but spiritual advancement, and thus initiated aspiring Vaiṣṇavas from all castes.

Continuing the lead of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura performed unprecedented service to Śrīdhāma Māyāpur. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had been instrumental in revealing the birthplace of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in Māyāpur and had done much to substantiate its authenticity and importance, especially by establishing the first temple there in modern times. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura exponentially increased that work by developing the expansive Śrī Caitanya Maṭha and other major and smaller buildings, reintroducing Navadvīpa-dhāma Parikramā, and quelling the dissent of those who denied that Māyāpur is the actual birthplace of Lord Caitanya.

Śrīmad B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja summarized the mission of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī:

> *nikhila-bhuvana-māyā-chinna-vicchinna-kartrī*
> *vibudha-bahula-mṛgyā-mukti-mohānta-dātrī*
> *śithilita-vidhi-rāgārādhya-rādheśa-dhānī*
> *vilasatu hṛdi nityaṁ haktisiddhānta-vāṇī*
>
> With his first step he cut to pieces the entire plane of exploitation, and with his second he crushed the speculation of scholars of salvation and liberation. With his third he softened *vaidhī bhakti* with a touch of divine love, *rāga-mārga.* Taking us beyond Vaikuṇṭha, he has introduced us to the highest worship of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda.
>
> With the softness of Vṛndāvana within and the hardness of a devastator without, he created havoc in the world by fighting with one and all. Singlehandedly battling against the whole world and cutting everything to pieces was his external feature. His second attitude was to stop the boasting research of scholars and doctors of different schools of thought. And third, to minimize and slacken the grandeur of the worship of Nārāyaṇa and establish service to Rādhā-Govinda as the topmost attainment. He caused the domain of love to descend into this plane with service to Rādhā-Govinda, establishing that the flow of divine love from the heart is all in all.
>
> That was his history, the real existence of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

Prabhupāda. May his divine teachings, *bhaktisiddhānta-vāṇī,* dance eternally within the core of our hearts.[*]

Although moving in this world, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was clearly not of it. An intense desire to satisfy Kṛṣṇa permeated every breath of his life. He was undoubtedly a "Vaikuṇṭha man," profusely decorated with all twenty-six qualities of a pure devotee.[†] While his achievements may be intimated by listing them, the true value of his contribution can be appreciated only by those who enter into the spirit of his teachings. As observed by Śrīpāda B.P. Purī Mahārāja (formerly Praṇavānanda Prabhu), who spent thirteen years with him: "I was astounded. He was completely pure. There was no black spot in his whole life."

Even though the personality of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura is not yet widely known among mundaners on this planet, the quality of his benefaction far exceeds that of Buddha, Jesus, and other titans of religion. It is highly regrettable and a symptom of the times that many conmen are lauded as sadhus and religious icons, whereas personages of the spiritual stature of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura remain largely unknown to the condemned populace of this wretched age. While the blind lead the blind, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura is a seer of reality capable of dispelling spiritual blindness, who as a direct manifestation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's internal potency is simply not of this world, and thus not comparable to any worldly moralist, elementary religious teacher, or unenlightened altruist.

Yet even though Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura is not yet well known, his mission was undoubtedly successful, for he distributed love of Kṛṣṇa across the planet through the activities of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who, considering himself merely a peon in the hands of that tremendous personage, wrote and prayed:

śrī-siddhānta sarasvatī śacī-suta priya ati
kṛṣṇa-sevāya yāra tula nāi
sei se mahānta-guru jagater madhe uru
kṛṣṇa-bhakti dey ṭhāi ṭhāi

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who is very dear to Lord Gaurāṅga, the son of Śacī, is unparalleled in his service to the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He is that great saintly spiritual master who bestows intense devotion to Kṛṣṇa at different places around the globe.

tāra icchā balavān pāścātyete ṭhān ṭhān
hoy yāte gaurāṅger nāma
pṛthivīte nagarādi āsamudra nada nadī
sakalei loy kṛṣṇa-nāma

By his strong desire, the holy name of Lord Gaurāṅga will spread throughout all the countries of the Western world. In all cities, towns, and villages on the earth, from all the oceans, seas, rivers, and streams, everyone will chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa.[3]

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda introduced Kṛṣṇa consciousness to every continent yet gave all credit to the *mahānta*-guru on whose order he had proceeded. The accomplishment of this one exceptional disciple is sufficient to ensure that the name and legacy of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura will be remembered perpetually. As His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda wrote about his beloved spiritual master: "He lives forever by his divine instructions, and the follower lives with him."[4]

Two

His Revolutionary Spirit and Its Repercussions

> The attempts of the great teachers to bring man back to the essentials of religious thought have always appeared to their contemporaries to be revolutionary and disruptive; they are in a true sense constructive, because the real vitality must lie in its spirit.[1]

Being inimical to serving Godhead, people of this world tend to distort religion, His gift for their upliftment, in innumerable ways. Maintaining an external show of piety, they misconstrue the purpose of religion and misuse it as an instrument for degradation and bondage rather than rectification and emancipation. Persons accustomed to such showbottle spiritualism accept petrified rituals as the essence of godliness, and staunchly defend as truth whatever dogmas they have imbibed.

Opposing such worldly practitioners of religion, spiritual reformers reveal the actual meaning and proper execution of religious praxes. They impregnate the empty shell of moribund religiosity with genuine knowledge of, experience of, and surrender to Godhead. Minor reformers merely attempt to adjust a few malpractices here or there, but a real revolutionary wields a sword. Undertaking great risk, he swiftly demolishes the facade maintained by powerful religious establishments. In recent history, *ācāryas* Rāmānuja and Madhva and indeed also Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu were revolutionaries whose messages appeared to be new, yet each presented his doctrine so powerfully and convincingly that it became recognized even during his lifetime.

Similarly, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura appeared at a time of increasing materialism and impiety. Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava society was almost wholly aberrant, to the degree that it was common even for its leaders—putative sadhus and gurus—to indulge in illicit sex and other vices. Pretense of spiritual advancement by persons of base character was so much the norm that candidates for *bhakti* were highly likely to be intercepted by hypocrites posing as spiritual guides. Or if perchance newcomers were fortunate to attain good association, hardly any were qualified to avail of it. For instance, several novice devotees associating with Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī adopted his dress and endeavored to follow his lifestyle, but for virtually all it was unviable to immediately come to the stage of a *mahā-bhāgavata*—and Bābājī Mahārāja rejected those who although unfit tried to do so. Unfortunately, for such neophytes there was no system or guidance for gradually advancing and overcoming *anarthas.* Their only option was to become an imitative *bābājī* or a Vaiṣṇava householder, in either case generally under the skewed or at best inept tutelage of an inadequate guru.

Those gurus who actually tried to instruct their disciples usually offered *līlā-smaraṇa,* a practice that very few people could even begin to undertake, most being *gṛhasthas* disqualified by dint of household duties from a life of contemplation, and even the unmarried persons being overly

restless for prolonged meditation. The emphasizing of a process too difficult for nearly all inevitably nurtured hypocrisy, and perhaps inadvertently obfuscated or created obstacles to the easy, natural process, the *yuga-dharma* of *harināma-saṅkīrtana.*

Thus perceiving that Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma as conducted during the prior four hundred years was no longer practicable for most candidates, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura rediscovered the genuine path of *śuddha-bhakti,* which otherwise had been the preserve of just a few reclusive *mahā-bhāgavata bābājīs*. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī next transferred that transcendental elixir into a new vessel, divorcing himself from false proponents of *bhakti* and introducing a new approach and social order sufficiently different as to be clearly distinguishable. Only by thus breaking with the external tradition masquerading as Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava orthodoxy could the internal and eternal tradition of the previous *ācāryas* have been genuinely perpetuated, for to have blindly adhered to injunctions meant for *paramahaṁsas* would not have been faithful to the ideals of *śāstra* and the *ācāryas.* Hence Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī revived the true spirit of Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission by inaugurating a method whereby it could again be propagated to the masses. He continued to delineate the highest goal revealed by previous *ācāryas,* yet simultaneously gave directions appropriate for modern man to realistically advance toward it.

He demonstrated that Lord Caitanya's teachings were meant not only for exceptionally qualified anchorites or the sinuous esoterica of offshoot cults, but were available to all people, regardless of class, caste, or cultural level. In pursuance of Lord Caitanya's desires, he created an active preaching mission for offering a pragmatic means to progress from *madhyama-adhikāra* (the intermediate stage of Kṛṣṇa conscious development), a process that was neither so dilute as to be insubstantial nor so high as to be largely inaccessible. To effect such a transposition he apparently made drastic modifications, but in fact he merely repackaged the legitimate process outlined in seminal Gauḍīya texts, especially *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* and *Bhakti-sandarbha.* He stressed the same points enunciated by all previous *ācāryas*—to hear and chant about and serve Kṛṣṇa in the association of pure devotees—but to facilitate these core activities he adjusted some details of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava practices, such as change of dress and liberality in awarding brahminical status and *sannyāsa.* Confuting charges of having violated *śāstra,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī explained in detail how everything he was doing not only upheld the letter of *śāstra,* but best fulfilled the spirit of *śāstra*. The success of his endeavors is obvious to all except the extremely prejudiced. Unlike mundane uprisings, his revolution was not vengeful or destructive, nor based on egoism, nor intended to benefit one group of people at the expense of another. As he clarified when once questioned about his alterations, his reforming attempt was not meant to speculatively reshape the *sampradāya,* but to restore its original form:

> Our work is not reformation, but reestablishment. The eternal truth that Lord Caitanya taught is not a proper subject for reform. Our service is to reestablish His forgotten teachings by taking Mahāprabhu's servants' shoes on our heads. Our duty is to save Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma from the unauthorized stains that foolish persons have dumped

on it.[2]

The root meaning of *revolution* is "to come back to the original point," and indeed that was Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's motto: "Back to home, back to Godhead." Although not directly stated, his message was clear: "Here is the proper way to follow Lord Caitanya. Practically everything else going on in His name is rotten. If you want to follow Lord Caitanya you must adopt this method." He reestablished *kīrtana* as an act of worship rather than a theatrical performance. He demonstrated that a veritable *brāhmaṇa* is a pure worshiper of Godhead, not someone possessing a body produced from the seminal secretion of another false *brāhmaṇa.* He restored the role of guru from that of a quasi-religious tax collector to its original function as a transmitter of love of Godhead.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī observed that a major discrepancy in Vaiṣṇavism at that time was an imbalanced emphasis on the apparently lusty dalliances of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, together with insufficient or practically no education offered toward understanding the profound theology underlying such esoterica. Among pseudo-devotees this deficiency engendered widespread indulgence in lechery—the epitome of crass materialism and gross envy of Kṛṣṇa—which they nonetheless touted as synonymous with pure devotion to Him. Perceiving that the genuinely devotional approach to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa-*līlā* was virtually eclipsed by vulgar highlighting of its erotic aspects, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī necessarily had to divorce himself from this most dangerous of deviations.

While previous Gauḍīya *ācāryas* who had preached widely typically presented Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti* in a manner appealing to the heart at least as much as to the head, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura—responding to the need in an age and ethos littered with speculative philosophers and faithless logicians, and wherein very few persons were readily eligible for the esoteric stages of *bhakti*—stressed accepting *bhakti* through *siddhānta* rather than immediately hopping to the affective and easily misunderstood amatory plane. When Professor Suthers of Ohio State University accused him of "an effusion of emotionality," Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura retorted, "In Vaiṣṇava philosophy there is no place for material emotion of any kind. The ephemeral emotionality relating to matter is not devotion; it is merely the property of the mind."[3]

Thus Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī propagated Vaiṣṇava dharma in a systematic philosophical manner designed both to disestablish Western assumptions of religious superiority and to disabuse sentimentalists and critics alike of the supposed licentiousness of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa-*līlā.* He ever distinguished the unsullied sentiments of *śuddha-bhakti* from their contaminated counterparts, caring naught that his presentation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness exactly in the true spirit of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī was certain to meet determined resistance:

> What a great revolution this is, that everyone in the Gauḍīya Maṭha is dedicating himself for preaching something that at first sight seems totally unique in the history of the human race. They are neither afraid of thousands of people proud of their knowledge, nor ready to pander to the deceitfulness and debauchery of the lewd. The Gauḍīya Maṭha is prepared to put to death the mentality of the countless living entities in the world who are averse to

> Kṛṣṇa and are devising many plans to steal the Supreme Sovereign's property. The Gauḍīya Maṭha preachers do not want even one paisa from this world; they want only to bestow a commodity that is complete. They want to completely give Caitanya-deva, the full transcendental consciousness.[4]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī preached with an unassailable courage and vigor born of conviction. He challenged everyone—atheists, agnostics, and materialistic semi-theists alike. Arriving in Vṛndāvana by motorcar, he demonstrated to the proud *bābājīs* in their loincloths the actual way to follow Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. As *rūpānuga-viruddhāpasiddhānta-dhvānta-hārī,* more than any previous *ācārya* he explicitly, thoroughly, forcefully, and persistently defined the path of *anyābhilāṣitā-śūnya-bhakti* in contradistinction to the numerous prevalent processes deviated from the path approved by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. He established himself as the authority on what Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī would approve or disapprove. In defiance to purveyors of half-truths or falsity disguised as truth, he was clearly the authorized transmitter of truth. His disciples certainly believed that in the modern age he alone truly represented and was competent to deliver the teachings of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī:

> His Divine Grace is the one perfectly loyal and convincing exponent of the teachings of Śrī Rūpa at this moment by his words and his activities. The salvation of the entire world lies in being enabled by Divine Grace to recognize and accept his exposition of the Truth.[5]

Yet such triumphalism was not like the blind, stubborn dogmatism of ordinary religionists who claim that theirs is the only way. To establish the reality that he, as a pure devotee, experienced at every moment, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī vastly studied many theistic and secular traditions of the world, and upheld with reason and scriptural evidence the superiority of the truth he represented.[*] Amid a constant storm of criticism, he shone through as an empowered *ācārya.* As such, he was not obliged to conform to current conventions, yet he unfailingly acted in consonance with *śāstra* for the ultimate welfare of all—even though many could not appreciate his contribution.

Three

In Hindsight

Although he was sometimes considered inordinately belligerent and rebellious, too much for confrontation and not enough for integration, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura came to be retrospectively accepted by sincere men as a constructive reformer who had done unparalleled good for society. Genuine Vaiṣṇavas, including many whose predecessors had been firmly pitted against him, recognize that had he not acted as he did to refurbish the cult of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, it would have been all but lost. Were it not for his efforts, Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism would have remained a marginal sect overflooded with misconceptions. Virtually all genres of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas today, with the exception of a tiny intransigent minority, laud the resurrection of Caitanya Mahāprabhu's teachings and their unprecedented spread throughout the world, and acknowledge that this endeavor was engendered by the missionary activities of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. To the chagrin of his few present-day detractors, the changes he wrought are ineradicable, with no possibility of reversion to status quo ante. As His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda wrote:

> In the Middle Ages, after the disappearance of Lord Caitanya's great associate Lord Nityānanda, a class of priestly persons claimed to be the descendants of Nityānanda, calling themselves the Goswami caste. They further claimed that the practice and spreading of devotional service belonged only to their particular class, which was known as Nityānanda-*vaṁśa.* In this way they exercised their artificial power for some time, until Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the powerful *ācārya* of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya,* completely smashed their idea. There was a great hard struggle for some time, but it has turned out successfully, and it is now correctly and practically established that devotional service is not restricted to a particular class of men. Besides that, anyone who is engaged in devotional service is already at the status of being a high-class *brāhmaṇa.* So Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's struggle for this movement has come out successful.[1]

Nowadays social factors, especially those stemming from industrialization, have anyway rendered the old caste system largely irrelevant. The influence of caste Goswamis has so much dwindled that, shorn of their traditional income and reduced to a spent religious force, most have been compelled to join the work force. Having lost all privileges and now busy earning a living like everyone else, deplumed descendants of caste Goswamis typically maintain no more semblance of religiousness than the average money-oriented man. Nearly all have shed any pretense of being spiritual leaders, and the few who continue as putative gurus generally supplement their income by secular means. And because the public is now better educated regarding standard Vaiṣṇava behavior, still-active *jāta-gosāñis* and members of other groups exposed by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura are more careful. Consciously or unconsciously, several have modified their behavior—for instance, by becoming vegetarian. Similarly, gross sexual

deviations among *bābājīs* and unblushing promotion of sex as a means of "*sādhana*" are now uncommon.

In hindsight, it is clear that without Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's reforms, particularly his dismantling of the caste throttlehold, global propagation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness could not have taken place. And hypothetically, even if some perverted form of *bhakti* had been distributed overseas, little benefit could have resulted from it.

On the other hand, despite Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's lifelong opposition to it, the *apa-sampradāya* contagion has been spreading internationally in the wake of the genuine *śuddha-bhakti* movement, and thus *sahajiyā* misconceptions hatched in India have now infiltrated Vaiṣṇava society worldwide. There will always be cheaters to oblige the many who want to be cheated, but sincere persons will be attracted to that which is actually for their benefit, as imparted unequivocally by self-realized *ācāryas*.

Four

Unreasonable Sarasvatī?

Even today, some view as total arrogance Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's unwillingness to compromise standards that apparently he himself had initiated, and consider that he unfairly denigrated others and upheld his self-assumed correctness by making seemingly outlandish claims quite incompatible with observed reality. Undoubtedly he was extraordinarily harsh in condemning imitative *bābājīs* and ostensibly stood against even the inclination for *nirjana-bhajana.* He declared that all devotees in Vraja-*maṇḍala* during his time were neophytes, despite many appearing to be truly advanced. He told at least two persons who had had repeated association with Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura that they had never seen him.[*] He presented himself as the only disciple of Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī, although possibly Bābājī Mahārāja did have other disciples.[†] And he discounted his *gurudeva's* having mixed with patent *sahajiyās* by stating that Bābājī Mahārāja's outward favoring of them was merely superficial, for actually he had no relationship with them.

Admittedly, from the platform of superficial religiosity or humanistic ethics nothing can be understood about this great transcendental personage. Only if one accepts that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī is as pure, free from material contamination, and possessed of transcendental vision as the Supreme Personality of Godhead whom he directly represents, can one appreciate how everything Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī said and did is certainly appropriate and for the welfare of the world—even if ostensibly in violation of what may seem true to ordinary reasonable people, whose ordinariness and reasonableness is necessarily fallible due to being shrouded in the illusion arisen from misidentifying the self as devoid of and not requiring a relationship with Kṛṣṇa, or from superficially accepting *bhakti* without grasping the genuine essence of surrender. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī expounded Goloka-*darśana* versus *jagad-darśana,* declaring the former axiomatically perfect and the latter axiomatically flawed, and therefore: "the word of the teacher of the absolute truth is truer than the earth and the heavens, and has to be received as such if his true meaning is to be realized."[1] [*] Another reason that he preached as he did was to dispel Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's grief.[†]

Although decried as hypercritical by persons opposed to their own self-interest, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura is worshiped as most magnanimous by persons aware of and committed to assisting him in his service to the servants of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Without at least theoretically acknowledging his position on that superlatively exalted transcendental plane, everything about Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura is sure to be misunderstood. By his incisive Hari-*kathā* he constantly strove to inculcate the non-dogmatic nature of his presentation of *bhakti-siddhānta,* and those who have entered into the spirit of his teachings can perceive the genuineness of everything he taught. Again, not to accept that the vast majority of *bābājīs* were degraded or at least imitative, not to accept that *nirjana-bhajana* is suitable only for fully consummate devotees, not to accept that an illustrious devotee such as Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is indiscernible to those who

consider him a flesh-and-blood product of Bengali middle-class society—any such outlook is actually dogmatic, being based on the desire to evade surrendering to Kṛṣṇa, on concomitant mundane attachment, and on willingness to substitute untruth for truth. The *ācāryas* speak from the world beyond illusion, and only to the *sevonmukha* do they grant entrance into and realization of that sphere, which to others remains incomprehensible. Thus:

> What we hear from a true guru initially seems revolting. We feel a rising inclination to compensate what appears by our empirical means to be inadequacy of the guru's intelligence. But the current of thought prevalent in the material sphere cannot assail *śrī-gurudeva,* who is too heavy for those who participate in that current. He has been able to keep them at a distance of innumerable crores of miles. He is guru, or the heaviest, because his position is not shifting. At the outset, we think that he sticks to his narrow conceptions due to his ignorance of external objects, and thus we want to widen the scope of his conceptions and ideals by telling him all about the empiric world. Such a notion follows from dullness of comprehension gleaned from the school of empiricism. Our *gurudeva* is free from such an idea. He is the servant of the absolute truth, not partial truth.[2]

Another seeming contradiction was Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's acceptance of all fine things of this world such as would be considered essential paraphernalia for maintaining the comfort and prestige of an aristocrat, yet his simultaneous and complete rejection of any trace of desire for worldly enjoyment and honor. This also can be understood only from a transcendental perspective. Attempts to measure him from a lower platform will yield lower judgments spawned by lust, greed, and envy and will ascribe these same taints to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, though he was clearly free from them. Factually, for his own sake he had no interest in finery, grand buildings, or any such things, but was exceedingly concerned that they be utilized in service to Kṛṣṇa. And because he wholly identified himself as Kṛṣṇa's servant, there was no question within his mind of not employing such opulences for His satisfaction. That he spoke with total disdain for the spirit of sensuous enjoyment suggests that either he was a shameless hypocrite or he truly meant what he said. Cavalier critics, sworn to their own destruction, will continue to blabber, yet those who are *sāragrāhī* will not hesitate to bow unconditionally at the feet of this unprecedented saint whose intensity of devotion introduced a new dimension to saintliness.

As previously stated, "Only those who have been blessed with this *dṛg-dṛśya-vicāra,* by the genuine desire to attain it, can begin to comprehend anything about the personality and teachings of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Others will necessarily blame him for the faults they ascribe to him due to their own refracted vision."[*]

At the deepest level, the apparent incongruency of this saintly person's seeming harshness is to be appreciated as an expression of his extreme internal sweetness, of his ambition that not a single *jīva* in the universe be deprived of the sweetness of serving Śrī Radha-Kṛṣṇa, and of his intense desire to satisfy Śrī Radha-Kṛṣṇa by rehabilitating Their lost servants. Moreover, as

Their intimate servant, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura could not tolerate to leave unchecked the bound *jīvas'* witting or unwitting insulting behavior toward Them.

Five

Continuing Accusations

As a revolutionary determined to restore the dignity of the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* and fulfil its purpose, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī made many seeming innovations and unreservedly criticized perpetrators of the antiquated status quo. His unrelenting salvos against the various obliquities of the *apa-sampradāyas* were naturally despised by their adherents, who countercharged with reciprocal arraignments: "Why do you wear a coat and expensive shoes? You ride in a car, use luxuries like electric fans, mix with materialists, and have a bodyguard. This is not Vaiṣṇava behavior. No previous great Vaiṣṇava did these things." Yet Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was never stymied by such spurious drivel, which he considered as affording further opportunities to elucidate the authenticity of his position, which he did personally and through disciples via innumerable lectures, conversations, and magazine articles. Indeed he welcomed counterattacks, feeling that even antipathetic publicity gave recognition to his position and would stimulate thoughtful people to ruminate on it.

Unable to suppress the rise of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, *apa-sampradāya* leaders were constantly thinking of ways to stall and slander it. Immensely riled, they busily spread defamatory canards about its members: "These overweening neo-sannyasis hate *gṛhasthas,*" "They kidnap children," "They don't respect Nityānanda Prabhu or *tulasī,*" and similar chimeric ideas that happened to pop into their heads. Unfazed by such mudslinging, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura compared blasphemy of Vaiṣṇavas to spitting at the sky—being so vast and so far above, the sky cannot be harmed or even disturbed by attempts to spit on it; rather, the spittle would simply fall back into the face of whoever undertook such an idiotic task.

Although Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was impeccable and thus not subject to blame, certain pseudo-intellectuals have presented numerous tortuous arguments, falsely based on *śāstra* and *siddhānta,* to assail him on several doctrinal and ecclesiastic issues. On the other hand, because of his philosophical rather than affective approach, coupled with his emphasis on the regulations of *vaidhī bhakti* and his condemnation of immature *siddha-praṇālī,* some rash critics considered him either a mere *jñānī* or a Vaikuṇṭha devotee unfit to appreciate Vraja-*rasa.* Caste Goswamis, *bābājīs,* and others resented his defying exclusivity for born *brāhmaṇas* by awarding brahminical initiation to men from all castes, and denounced his accepting and conferring *sannyāsa* and introducing red rather than white cloth for renunciants. Lalitā Prasāda Ṭhākura and his followers averred that he had swerved from the path of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. And protests came from virtually all quarters of the Gauḍīya world against Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's propagating a *bhāgavata-(*o r *śikṣā-) paramparā,* rather than adhering to established lineages, and that his aggressive preaching not only transgressed the Vaiṣṇava principle of humility, but caused innumerable offenses to respected devotees. Some opponents even alleged that he was never actually initiated.

Certainly Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was unprecedentedly innovative, yet he cited scriptural authority to demonstrate that his modifications were strictly in conformity to the teachings of previous Gauḍīya *ācāryas*—that by presenting "old wine in new bottles" his apparent innovations were simply measures for reinstating and revivifying the pristine, eternal universal dharma described in *śāstra.* For instance, although many Gauḍīyas mistakenly considered *varṇāśrama-dharma* antithetical to Lord Caitanya's mission, it was required both for the general populace and by all except highly advanced devotees; hence Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura reactivated practices such as Vaiṣṇava *gṛha-praveśa, śrāddha,* and other rites of passage, thereby enabling householders to connect their family life with *śuddha-bhakti* and be freed from decrepit traditions tethering them to materialistic society.

Manifold calumny against the lion guru was thoroughly rebutted during his manifest presence, a task continued by his discipular descendants, whose massive promotion of Caitanya Mahāprabhu's teachings in the modern world have eclipsed the previous orthodoxy.[*] Yet even today, a handful of vocal scholars claiming to represent the old schools of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism continue to wage inordinate propaganda against Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and the movement he began. Paradoxically, those quibbling pedants who at present are adamant to undermine Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his line were all accepted into the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* through the ministration of his foremost disciple His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Had there been no merciful preaching by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his followers, these self-appointed spokesmen of the old oligarchy would likely never have heard of Kṛṣṇa at all, except perhaps through the educational system that some flopped into after failing in attempts to practice a "higher, more authorized" process of *bhakti.* Their compromises with Western lifestyle would traditionally be regarded by "orthodox" *sampradāyas* as a complete disqualification for performing any level of *bhakti,* let alone for becoming an exponent of *siddhānta,* yet they now profess theoretical notions of *rāga* through the internet. Ironically, their inconstancy in the *rāga-mārga*—their part-time *prema* squeezed in between attempts at making a living—underscores the need for the balanced approach presented by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, which they nonetheless shrilly decry.

These foolish ingrates dare accuse Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his disciples of misleading and cheating others and being materially motivated, as if they themselves were more saintly, learned, and capable of providing guidance. But these blinkered pedagogues, despite having acquired considerable book knowledge, are hardly qualified to criticize personages who are universally recognized (except by these few spiteful pettifoggers) as empowered *ācāryas.* Persons lacking deep understanding of Vaiṣṇava ontology, who fail to detect the thread that vitally and absolutely connects Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura with the previous *ācāryas,* adjudge him as divorced from the lineage that preceded him. Certainly, his constructing marble temples and hobnobbing with the suave elite was seemingly far removed from the ideals of Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī, whom he claimed as his immediate predecessor guru. Yet clearly the marvel of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's achievements could not have been possible unless he was imbued with Kṛṣṇa-*śakti,* the Supreme Lord's special potency for spreading *śuddha-bhakti.* As stated in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta:*

kali-kālera dharma—kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana
kṛṣṇa-śakti vinā nahe tāra pravartana

The fundamental religious system in Kali-yuga is the chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. Unless empowered by Kṛṣṇa, one cannot propagate the *saṅkīrtana* movement. (Cc 3.7.11)

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's natural indifference to sense gratification, his forceful proclamation of truth without regard for cheap popularity, and the exactitude, insight, cogency, power, and philosophical depth of his teachings unmistakably indicate that he is an extraordinary transcendental beacon. That while performing *śata-koṭi-nāma-yajña* for over nine years he chanted in the manner of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura attests to a level of *bhajana* not possible for any save the highest of devotees. His stellar accomplishments in spreading Lord Caitanya's mission encompassed profuse writing and publishing, establishing numerous temples and monasteries, personally observing and imparting quality spiritual practices, and convincing thousands to radically remold their lives in serious pursuit of divine values. Thus he effected the recrudescence of a Gauḍīya tradition previously nigh lost in sensuality and irrelevance. To pronounce him an offender to Vaiṣṇavas, not properly initiated, or mistaken in his methods or teachings is flagrantly inconsistent with his superlative achievements. As stated in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* about Lord Caitanya, and applicable also to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and other exceptional pure devotees, their divinity is obvious from "uncommon deeds and uncommon Kṛṣṇa conscious realization; yet faithless persons do not see what is plainly evident, just as owls do not see the rays of the sun."[1]

The biographies of Caitanya Mahāprabhu explicitly declare His desire that His name be preached all over the world. But myopically traditional Vaiṣṇavas are not interested in this, nor have they any inclination or clue as to how it might transpire, remaining apparently blind to Śrī Caitanya's *mano-'bhīṣṭa* being palpably fulfilled all around them, and incognizant that whatever little prominence they have acquired is merely a spinoff from the global diffusion of *bhakti.* They have nothing to say about this transcendental phenomenon, other than to criticize self-effulgent devotees favored by Lord Caitanya to satisfy His wishes. Undoubtedly, only a person with no true connection to Mahāprabhu could fault exalted personages who widely spread His name and message, for a true follower must revel in the wonderful diffusion of Mahāprabhu's glories all over the planet. Surely the most condemned within the universe are they who spurn the mercy of the most merciful representative of the most merciful avatar, by rejecting and blaspheming him, thus preparing themselves for an unimaginably dismal fate.

Those self-appointed spokesmen of the "traditional school," who either as born or converted *mlecchas* could never have been accepted as disciples by strictly traditional caste-conscious *brāhmaṇas* and Vaiṣṇavas, stridently tout brahmanism by birth—a position increasingly meaningless in today's society, wherein practically the only difference between supposed *brāhmaṇas* and the plebeian masses is their surnames. These unreasonable faultfinders profusely quote *śāstra* without comprehending that since *śāstra* gives omniform injunctions suited for different times, places, and circumstances, it is the duty and prerogative of an *ācārya*

to select those instructions applicable to the specific situation he addresses—for as demonstrated throughout *śāstra,* lower principles may be adjusted or forsworn to facilitate the higher—and thus his absolute teachings should not be confused with the functional ones, which are to be understood according to the context he ministers within. Furthermore, to serve a sublime purpose, exceptional spiritual leaders may sometimes apparently transgress standard norms—for instance, Lord Caitanya's ostensibly accepting *sannyāsa* from a Māyāvādī. Unfortunately, the intellectually straitjacketed fail to grasp these basic points.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's innovations will probably be disputed for generations, but had he not made them, probably there would have been few Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas to dispute anything. The criticism will continue, but so also will the movement inaugurated by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura for delivering fallen conditioned souls. Dogs will bark, but the caravan rolls on.

Epilogue

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī concluded his descriptions of Lord Caitanya's pastimes thus:

> *ākāśa—ananta, tāte yaiche pakṣi-gaṇa*
> *yāra yata śakti, tata kare ārohaṇa*
>
> The sky is unlimited, but many birds fly higher and higher according to their individual ability.
>
> *aiche mahāprabhura līlā—nāhi ora-pāra*
> *'jīva' hañā kebā samyak pāre varṇibāra?*
>
> The pastimes of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu are like the unlimited sky. How then can an ordinary living being describe them all?
>
> *yāvat buddhira gati, tateka varṇiluṅ*
> *samudrera madhye yena eka kaṇa chuṅiluṅ*
>
> As far as my intelligence allows, I have tried to describe them, as if trying to touch a drop in the midst of a great ocean. (Cc 3.20.79–81)

To realize the profound significance and depth of the pastimes of a *nitya-siddha mahā-bhāgavata* is certainly not possible for a person still under the clutches of material desire. Nevertheless, I crave the indulgence of my *ācāryas* and request their blessings and mercy that, despite being presented by one with all the defects inherent in conditioned souls, this amateurish attempt to glorify Oṁ Viṣṇupāda Paramahaṁsa Parivrājakācārya Aṣṭottara-śata Śrī Śrīmad Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda may be pleasing to them, and a worthy contribution to Vaiṣṇava society.[*]

Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava is but a humble presentation of information and insights about a towering saint who moved within human society in days not long past, yet whose gifts went largely unrecognized both by those who saw him as their adversary or competitor and by persons who, busy in the here-and-now and dismissive of otherworldly pursuits, saw him as just another sadhu. Hopefully this book will form a springboard for further research into the contributions of that great *ācārya.* And upon those already blessed with appreciation of his greatness, devolves the responsibility to extensively broadcast his name and message all over the universe. *Ebe yaśa ghuṣuk tribhuvana:* "May his glories be spread throughout the three worlds."[1]

Notes

References of the type "vol. *x,* p. *y*" indicate entries in *Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava.*

Part Three: The Preaching Challenge

Response to Modern Trends

1 "A convenient passport"—*Harmonist* 28.11 (June 1930).

2 Most of this paragraph is based on a paragraph from *Nadia Prakash* 12.276.1127.

3 SCT 272.

4 Much in this section was adapted from an article (posted on an e-forum) by Prof. Jan Brzezinski, a scholar of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism.

Preaching to the Intelligentsia

1 Gv 1.48.

2 Gv 1.51.

3 Gv 1.40–42.

4 B.K. Śramaṇa, *Prabhupada Saraswati Thakur,* 263.

5 *Gauḍīya* 20.65–69; *Śrī Śrī Sarasvatī Saṁlāpa* (Allahabad), 89.

6 Cc 2.8.191, commentary.

7 Cc 2.20.108.

8 Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

Preaching to the World

1 From "The Gauḍīya Mission to the West," *Harmonist* 30.322–33 (May 1933).

2 *Harmonist* 25.5 (inaugural English ed., June 1927).

3 Lecture (1 Feb 1936), *Gauḍīya* 16.299; Gv 1.145.

4 *Harmonist* 29.167 (December 1931).

5 *Gauḍīya* 15.3.

6 *Śrī Śrī Sarasvatī Saṁlāpa* (Allahabad), 130.

7 Lecture, 13 December 1973, *tirobhāva-tithi* of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.

8 *Vaiśiṣṭyāṣṭakam* 2.

Preaching in the West

1 *Gauḍīya* 13.214; Gv 3.38.

2 Extracts from an essay published in SCT as "L'Envoi," which is based on "My Advice" (*Harmonist* 30.315–19; April 1933), derived from "Āmār Kathā," *Gauḍīya* 11.505–7 (25 March 1933).

3 *Harmonist* 30.320 (April 1933).

4 Letter (16 January 1934), Sj 208.

5 Letter (13 February 1934), Sj 208.

6 Letter (21 April 1933), Sj 207.

7 Letter (29 May 1934), *Patrāvalī* 2.141.

8 Letter (21 August 1933), Sj 207–8.

9 Rudyard Kipling, "The Ballad of East and West."

10 *Gauḍīya* 16th year (special Vyāsa-*pūjā* issue), 18.

11 Ibid.

12 *Gauḍīya* 13.693–94.

13 *Gauḍīya* 20.65.

14 *Harmonist* 33.93–94 (24 December 1936).

15 *Śrī Śrī Sarasvatī Saṁlāpa* (Māyāpur), 190.

16 *Harmonist* 31.392–96 (29 April 1935).

Christianity

1 *Gauḍīya* 11.402.

2 PST 104.

3 *Conversations with Śrīla Prabhupāda* 32.242.

4 Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

5 Cc 2.15.162–63, commentary.

6 Av 168; SPU 14.

7 SCT 336.

8 SCT 429.

9 Gv 2.64.

10 Culled from SCT 338.

11 *Harmonist* 29.28 (July 1931)

12 *Harmonist* 32.90 (23 October 1935).

13 Ibid.

14 *Śrī Śrī Sarasvatī Saṁlāpa* (Allahabad), 64–67.

Other Vaiṣṇava Sampradāyas and Sadhus

1 Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, *Navadvīpa-dhāma-māhātmya, Parikramā-khaṇḍa,* chap. 16.

2 *Harmonist* 25.89 (September 1927).

3 For Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's presentation of *Artha-pañcaka,* see *Gauḍīya* 2.15.1–4 and 2.16.1–2.

4 This analogy was related by Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

5 Culled from Hk 1.91–92, 95–96.

6 *Gauḍīya* 12.640.

7 *Gauḍīya* 9.507.

8 *Harmonist* 27.330 (March 1930).

9 Ibid.

10 Gv 3.214.

11 *Rādhā-bhāva-dyuti-suvalita*—Cc 1.1.5. For the full verse and translation, see vol. 3, p. 80.

12 Gv 3.85–87.

13 *Śrī Śrī Sarasvatī Saṁlāpa* (Māyāpur), 182 and 187.

14 *Gauḍīya* 13.420–21.

15 *Śrī Śrī Sarasvatī Saṁlāpa* (Māyāpur), 192–93.

16 *Harmonist* 28.127 (September 1930).

Indian Independence Movement

1 *Harmonist* 28.64 (July 1930).

2 Av 269; SPU 321–22.

3 *Harmonist* 31.426 (14 May 1934).

4 Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

5 *Harmonist* 28.127 (September 1930).

6 For example, see: Mahadev H. Desai (Mahadev Haribhai), tr., introduction to pt. 2 of *The Gospel of Selfless Action or The Gita According to Gandhi* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1946), par. 1–6.

7 This paragraph is based on statements by Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

8 Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

9 This is another anecdote preserved in oral tradition only, details differing according to each narrator.

10 *Gauḍīya* 3.35.8–9.

11 Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, *Collected Teachings of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda,* 2.3.

Deviant Vaiṣṇava Groups

1 Av 256; SPU 183.

2 This list is from a well-known saying of Śrī Totārāma Bābājī quoted in Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's commentary to Cb 1.17.151.

3 Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, *Bhakti-tattva-viveka,* chap. 1.

4 *Brāhmaṇa and Vaiṣṇava* 192–93.

5 Sanātana Dāsa, "Śrī-guru-vandanā."

6 *Harmonist* 26.150 (December 1928).

7 Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

8 Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, *Collected Lectures on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* 8.115.

9 *Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta,* sec. 2, pt. 3.

10 SCT 161.

11 "Śrī Guru-gītā," *Uttara-khaṇḍa, Skanda Purāṇa.*

12 Letter (29 October 1934), *Patrāvalī* 3.37.

13 Cb 1.14.84, commentary.

14 Av 40; SPU 69.

15 Gv 2.256–57.

16 Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

17 *Manu-saṁhitā* 5.15.

18 Cb 3.2.375, commentary.

19 *Gauḍīya* 11.409.

20 Gv 2.163.

21 *Gīta-govinda* 1.2.

22 Gv 1.147.

23 Gv 2.64.

24 *Harmonist* 25.32–33 (July 1927).

25 Gv 3.247–48.

26 Gv 3.266.

27 *Gauḍīya* 26.399.

28 This anecdote appears in *Upākhyāne Upadeśa.*

29 Adapted from his *Anubhāṣya* commentary on Cc 3.20.28 and the corresponding purport by Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

30 *Gauḍīya* 11.217.

31 Av 241; SPU 324.

32 *Gauḍīya* 9.542.

33 *Harmonist* 29.19–20 (July 1931).

34 Gv 3.212.

35 *Brāhmaṇa and Vaiṣṇava* 181.

36 *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.2.12.

37 Spoken by Lord Śiva in *Varāha Purāṇa* and quoted as Cb 1.16.301.

38 "Vaiṣṇava-vaṁśa," *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 19.241–50.

39 That *kīrtana,* beginning *kṛṣṇa haite catur-mukha,* is published in almost all songbooks issued by ISKCON and various Gauḍīya Maṭhas.

40 *Brāhmaṇa and Vaiṣṇava* 184–85.

41 Śrī Gopījanavallabhānanda-deva Gosvāmī, *Śrī Śrī Suvijñāna-ratnamālā* (Gopīvallabhpur: Śrī Viśvambhara Granthāgāra, 1999), p. *jha.*

42 See Cc 2.16.78–82.

43 This paragraph is based on statements by Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

44 *Harmonist* 29.18–19 (July 1931).

45 Cb 1.16.293, commentary.

46 *Śrī Śrī Sarasvatī Saṁlāpa* (Allahabad), 110.

47 *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* 2.12.

48 *Nāradīya Purāṇa* 1.37.12, quoted by Jīva Gosvāmī in *Bhakti-sandarbha* 186.

49 "Caste System and Varṇāśrama," *Harmonist* 31.39 (19 September 1934).

50 *Letters from Śrīla Prabhupāda* 3.1504.

51 The first list of qualities is from Bg 18.42; the second is excerpted from the 26 qualities of a devotee that are described in Cc 2.22.78–80.

52 Letter (26 February 1935), *Patrāvalī* 3.49.

53 Quoted in Saṁvidānanda Dāsa's thesis.

54 Letter (26 February 1935), *Patrāvalī* 3.49–50.

55 The previous two sentences are culled from: Edward C. Dimock, Jr., "Rabindranath Tagore —'The Greatest of the Bāuls of Bengal,'" *The Journal of Asian Studies* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Association for Asian Studies), vol. 19, no. 1 (Nov. 1959), 36–37.

56 See Cc 1.8.21, 3.3.126, 3.14.51, 3.17.46.

57 Gv 3.260.

58 Some information in this paragraph is from an untitled review by Rachel Fell McDermott in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society,* vol. 123, no. 4 (Oct–Dec 2003), 904–6.

59 Hk 1.39.

60 The story of Vāmana-deva, Bali Mahārāja, and Śukrācārya appears in SB 8.18–23.

61 This and the previous sentence are from Gv 1.114–15.

62 Cc 1.1.5. For the full verse and translation, see vol. 3, p. 80.

63 Gv 3.161.

64 *Gauḍīya* 2.6.6.

65 From the poetic envoy to his *Anuvṛtti* gloss on *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta.*

Other Deviant Genres

1 Cc 1.7.33, commentary.

2 Re the life of *bhakti,* see Viśvanātha Cakravartī's *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu-bindu* 1.1. Re Māyāvāda destroys *sevya-sevaka-bhāva,* see Cc 3.2.95.

3 SCT 339.

4 *Gopī-... -dāsānudāsaḥ*—Cc 2.13.80.

5 Hk 2.6–7.

6 Hk 2.16; Gv 1.37.

7 This statement by Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was told by Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda to Yaśomatīnandana dāsa.

8 This critique is based on: Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, *Renunciation Through Wisdom* (Mumbai: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 2005), 234.

9 See *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* 10.42, purport, and *Letters from Śrīla Prabhupāda* 3.1987.

10 *Gauḍīya* 15.23.

11 *Conversations with Śrīla Prabhupāda* 23.367.

12 This anecdote is related in Sj 336–38.

Further Contentious Issues

1 *Bṛhan-nāradīya Purāṇa.*

2 Gv 3.239.

3 *Śrī Caitanya Darśane Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura* 2.260.

4 SCT 122.

5 "Prākṛta-rasa-śata-dūṣiṇī," 4.

6 Gv 1.286.

7 Gv 3.155.

8 Hk 1.24–25.

9 See SB 1.17.38–39.

10 Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

11 See *Gauḍīya Kaṇṭhahāra* 17.27.

12 Cc 1.7.83, commentary.

13 *Bahubhir... saṅkīrtanam*—a common rendition of a similar statement by Jīva Gosvāmī in *Bhakti-sandarbha.*

14 Gv 1.300–304.

15 The last six paragraphs of this section are as told by Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

16 Gv 2.82.

17 Letter (17 November 1930), *Patrāvalī* 2.89–90.

18 This quote is based on a summary of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's position, as spoken by Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

19 Hk 1.30.

20 *Bhajana-rahasya.*

21 Adapted from a translated rendition of a lecture by Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī on his Vyāsa-*pūjā* day, featured in *Harmonist* 28.331 (April 1931). An abstract of the original appears in Hk 2, with this quote on p. 112.

22 Gv 3.87.

23 Gv 3.249–50.

24 *Nadia Prakash* 12.246.1007.

25 *Gauḍīya* 13.19.291.

26 Gv 3.154–55.

27 "Prākṛta-rasa-śata-dūṣiṇī," 28.

28 Gv 3.25.

29 “Vaiṣṇava Ke?” 18. (See vol. 3, p. 64)

30 *Śrīla Prabhupādera Boktṛtābalī* 1.134.

31 Adapted from Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda's rendition of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's commentary on Cc 1.13.42.

32 *Gauḍīya* 12.651.

33 Gv 1.149–57.

34 *Śrīla Prabhupādera Boktṛtābalī* 1.134.

35 Gv 2.86.

36 *Śrīla Prabhupādera Boktṛtābalī* 2.176.

37 *Krama-sandarbha* commentary on SB 7.5.18.

38 Cb 1.16.172, commentary.

39 Letter (27 October 1915), *Patrāvalī* 1.4–5.

40 Gv 1.198.

41 Gv 1.296, 1.299.

42 Letter (18 December 1932), *Patrāvalī* 2.118–19.

43 *Gauḍīya* 13.213; Gv 3.35.

44 *Gauḍīya* 9.30.506.

45 Letter (13 December 1928), *Patrāvalī* 1.62–63.

46 Av 127; SPU 384.

47 *Gauḍīya* 11.216.

48 Cc 2.16.280–81, commentary.

49 Gv 1.213–14.

50 *Prārthanā*.

51 *Gauḍīya* 20.321.

52 Gv 1.245.

53 *Manaḥ-śikṣā* 1.

54 *Gauḍīya* 11.220.

55 *Gauḍīya* 14.189.

56 *Gauḍīya* 20.257 and Gv 2.153.

57 Gv 3.176–77.

58 *Anuvṛtti* on *Upadeśāmṛta* 11.

59 Gv 2.257.

60 Hk 1.90.

61 *Gauḍīya* 13.214.

62 Letter (25 October 1929), *Patrāvalī* 2.73.

63 *Harmonist* 31.4 (4 September 1934).

64 Spoken by Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī (*Gauḍīya* 20.319; SCT 185).

65 Gv 1.286.

66 *Padma Purāṇa.*

67 Culled from *Gauḍīya* 5.24, Hk 1.49–51, and SPU 284–85.

68 *Gauḍīya* 14.11.171.

69 SJ 145–46.

70 Letter (1 April 1926), *Patrāvalī* 2.50–51.

71 *Harmonist* 25.3–4 (June 1927).

72 *Harmonist* 32.440 (31 May 1936).

73 Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, *Caitanya-candrāmṛta* 49.

74 *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 15.1. *See* Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda, *Śrī Bhaktivinoda-vāṇī-vaibhava,* chap. 13.

75 Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, *The Bhagavat,* p. *x.*

76 *Harmonist* 25.89 (September 1927).

77 The quoted statement is from *Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta* 3.2.

78 Hk 1.59.

79 This article is featured in vol. 3, pp. 141–47.

80 See footnote beginning on the previous page for the source of the previous text in this section.

81 Text in this section, from "Jagad-guru Śrīla Bhaktivinoda" to this point, is from Av 120–21; SPU 145–47.

82 *Śrī Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhu-kṛta Śrī Upadeśāmṛta,* 2nd ed., (Kolkata: Śrī Gauḍīya Mission, 1980), 222–24.

83 Brs 1.2.91.

84 *Gauḍīya* 20.357–59.

85 Gv 3.69–83.

86 *Śikṣāṣṭaka* 3.

87 Cb 1.17.154–58, commentary.

88 Gv 1.54.

89 PST 102.

90 *Harmonist* 30.326–27 (May 1933).

91 Av 166; SPU 86.8.

92 This anecdote appears in *Upākhyāne Upadeśa.*

93 Re *saralatā,* see Cc 3.2.117, commentary.

94 *'Krodha' bhakta-dveṣi jane*—from *Prema-bhakti-candrikā.*

95 SPU 401.

96 Gv 3.120.

97 Cc 2.23.2

98 SPU 85.

99 *Śrī Śrī Sarasvatī Saṁlāpa* (Allahabad), 125.

100 Cc 2.7.130, commentary.

101 *Sree Krishna Chaitanya* 2.18.

102 *Harmonist* 25.160–61 (December 1927).

103 *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* 2.9.

104 The above two paragraphs are based on Jati Śekhara Prabhu's account. The explanation of *bhāgavata-paramparā* in the prior paragraph is culled from various discipular followers of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī who understood his explanation as recounted herein.

105 *Harmonist* 26.53–54 (August 1928).

106 Gv 1.153–54.

107 Sj 239.

108 SPU 96.

109 Most of this section up to this point was gleaned from *Gauḍīya* 7.62–64.

110 Letter (23 November 1933), *Patrāvalī* 3.10–11.

111 Av 256–57; SPU 185.

Part Four: Disciples, Associates, and Acquaintances

Accepting and Honoring Disciples

1 From Cb 2.23.78 and Cc 2.15.108 respectively.

2 SPU 401.

Guru-Disciple Interactions

1 Av 363; SPU 37.

2 Av 47; SPU 152–53.

3 *Prema-bhakti-candrikā.*

4 SPU 267.

5 Letter (20 October 1928), *Patrāvalī* 1.58.

6 Hk 2.18–19.

7 From a speech in 1933 at the Theistic Exhibition in Dacca, *Gauḍīya* 11.347.

8 *Gauḍīya* 14.455.

9 *Gauḍīya* 15.332.

10 *Gauḍīya* 6.16.

11 Culled from *Nadia Prakash* 12.293.5; *Śrīla Prabhupādera Boktṛtābalī* 4.58–60.

12 *Gauḍīya* 9.273; Gv 2.1.

13 *Gauḍīya* 11.347.

14 Translation of a verse composed by Śrīdhara Svāmī in his commentary on SB 7.9.1, quoted in Cc 2.8.6.

15 Av 359; SPU 3.

16 Culled from statements by Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda in which he quoted Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.

17 Av 130.

18 Av 131.

19 Lecture (8 November 1936), *Gauḍīya* 15.23–24.8.

20 *Gauḍīya* 20.320.

21 See Cc 2.9–10.

22 Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, *Collected Lectures on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* 6.123.

23 Unless otherwise referenced, anecdotes in this section are told by Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

24 SB 11.28.2.

25 A reference to Cb 2.13.43.

26 Letter (4 December 1931), *Patrāvalī* 2.106.

27 This anecdote was told by B.R. Śrīdhara.

28 Ibid.

29 Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

30 *Śaṅkha... bāje*—"Gaura-ārati," *Gītāvalī.*

31 Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

32 Letter (9 May 1929), *Patrāvalī* 2.61.

33 *Harmonist* 28.330 (April 1931).

34 B.P. Prapanna, via Bhakti Cāru Swami.

35 Letter (29 July 1935), *Patrāvalī* 3.74–75.

36 Letter (15 November 1935), *Patrāvalī* 3.88.

37 From a popular *kīrtana* of the "Gaura-candrikā" genre, sung to inaugurate Vaiṣṇava events (not in Gauḍīya Maṭha).

38 *Gītāvalī.*

39 Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

40 Letter (11 October 1916), *Patrāvalī* 2.15–16.

Marriage and Family Life

1 Av 182; SPU 237.

2 Lecture (21 September 1925), Sj 345.

3 *Gauḍīya* 9.35.581–83.

4 *Gauḍīya* 11.346.

5 This incident and the following comments by Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī are described by blending elements from the slightly different versions given in Sj 163–64 and Gv 1.148.

6 Av 139–40; SPU 202–3.

7 Av 364; SPU 41.

8 *Harmonist* 28.328–29 (April 1931).

9 For instance, see Jīva Gosvāmī's *Krama-sandarbha* commentary on SB 7.5.23.

10 Gv 2.171.

11 SPU 364.

12 Civil suicide—*See* Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, *Collected Lectures on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* 4.54. *Maṭha-vāsa*—Gv 2.233–34.

13 Letter (4 January 1922), *Patrāvalī* 2.33–47.

14 *Gauḍīya* 15.23–24.8.

Profiles of Disciples: Sannyasis and Bābājīs

1 *Jīvanta mṛdaṅgas—Gauḍīya* 9.171.

2 Adapted from *Harmonist* 28.201 (December 1930).

3 Cc 2.12.51.

4 Quoted in *Harmonist* 25.47 (July 1927).

5 Cc 2.7.129.

6 Quoted in *Harmonist* 25.47 (July 1927).

7 *Nadia Prakash* 12.293.6.

8 Letter (6 June 1924), *Patrāvalī* 1.75.

9 *Harmonist* 28.187–88 (November 1930).

10 *Gauḍīya* 19.23.

11 *Patrāvalī* 3.69–70.

12 Much of this information concerning Jājābar Mahārāja is from his article "Śrī Śrī Guru-Vyāsa-Pūjā," *Śrī Caitanya Vāṇī* 13.12.33–37 (29 January 1974).

13 The figure of 13, stated to have been published in the *Gauḍīya,* was told by Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

14 Culled from *Gauḍīya* 15.179–80 and Jati Śekhara Prabhu.

Profiles of Other Disciples

1 Letter (31 July 1934), *Patrāvalī* 3.20–22.

2 *Śrī Guru-preṣṭha* 6–9.

3 *Harmonist* 31.416 (May 1935).

4 "Beloved counterpart"—*Harmonist* 25.144 (November 1927). (See vol. 1, p. 230)

5 This *kīrtana* appears in *Śrī Gauḍīya-gīti-guccha,* 6th ed. (Navadvīpa: Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha, 1991), 104.

6 This list is from Sundarānanda Prabhu's *Chātradera Śrī Bhaktivinoda,* published after Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's departure.

7 *Gauḍīya* 11.112.

8 *Gauḍīya* 3.27.8–13.

9 *Mahābhārata; Skanda Purāṇa.*

10 Culled from *Gauḍīya* 11.347, Jati Śekhara Prabhu, and others.

11 *Harmonist* 28.188 (November 1930).

12 *Harmonist* 28.194–97 (December 1930).

13 The *tirobhāva* of Haridāsa Ṭhākura is described in Cc 3.11.

14 "Karmajaḍa-smārta-vāda o Śuddha-bhāgavata-siddhānta" (Karma theory of dull *smārtas,* and the pure devotional conclusion) *Gauḍīya* 15.202–6, 233–37.

15 Much in this section is culled from the writings of B.V. Tīrtha, the foremost disciple of B.D. Mādhava.

16 Mūlaprakṛti Dāsī, *Our Srila Prabhupada,* 263.

17 See *Collected Teachings of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda* 1.20–21.

18 *See* Mūlaprakṛti Dāsī, *Our Srila Prabhupada,* 32–33.

19 Ibid., 29.

20 Ibid., 33–34.

21 Cc 2.20.108.

22 "Śrī Kṛṣṇera Aṣṭottara-śata nāma."

23 Corbluth and Mrs. Korbel are described in *Gauḍīya* 12.165–66.

24 This narration was personally related to the author by Saṅkīrtana Prabhu.

Other Associates

1 This entire profile is based on *Gauḍīya* 20.133–34.

Part Five: His Contributions Reviewed

Overview

1 "Vaiṣṇava Ke?" 18. (See vol. 3, p. 32)

2 These are two of the four verses of a *kīrtana* that is one of the most famous among Bengali Vaiṣṇavas (for instance, it is quoted in large print on a full page of the front matter in the Gauḍīya Maṭha edition of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta.*

3 Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, "Śrī-kṛṣṇa-pāda-padme-prārthanā" [composed just prior to his arrival in America in 1965], *Bhakti-gīti Sañcayan* 30–31.

4 Dedication, SB.

His Revolutionary Spirit and Its Repercussions

1 Sir William Malcolm Hailey (governor of the United Provinces), 21 November 1932; cited in *Leader,* 23 November 1932; re-cited in *Harmonist* 30.179 (December 1932).

2 *Śrī Śrī Sarasvatī Saṁlāpa* (Allahabad), 125.

3 SCT 267.

4 Gv 3.267.

5 *Harmonist* 28.127 (September 1930).

In Hindsight

1 *The Nectar of Devotion,* chap. 5.

Unreasonable Sarasvatī?

1 *Harmonist* 30.209 (7 January 1933) (quoted in context in vol. 1, p. 167).

2 SCT 237–38.

3 Cc 1.3.85–86.

Epilogue

1 *Prema-bhakti-candrikā.*

Sanskrit/Bengali Pronunciation Guide

Used within this book is a standard transliteration system accepted by scholars that approximates Sanskrit sounds. Most Bengali words transliterated herein are also rendered according to this system (employed in the publications of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda), even though the pronunciation of some Bengali letters differs significantly from their Sanskrit equivalents. Bengali and Oriya also differ from Sanskrit in not being entirely phonetic. Much of the Sanskrit quoted in this book was spoken by Bengalis and Oriyas, who would have pronounced it in their characteristically distinctive manner.

In both Sanskrit and Bengali, long vowels are indicated by a line above the letter representing it.

In Sanskrit, the short vowel **a** is pronounced like the *u* in *trust,* long **ā** as in *sari.* Short **i** is pronounced as in *bliss,* long **ī** as in *unique;* short **u** as in *flute,* long **ū** like the *oo* in *moo.*

The vowel **ṛ** is pronounced like the *ri* in *Krishna;* **e** as in *they* or sometimes as in *pen;* **ai** as in *aisle;* **o** and **au** as in *glow* and *beau.*

The *anusvāra* (**ṁ**), a pure nasal sound, is pronounced as in the French word *bon;* the *visarga* (**ḥ**), a strong aspirate, like a final **h** sound. At the end of a couplet, **aḥ** is pronounced *aha,* **iḥ** pronounced *ihi,* etc.

The guttural consonants **k, kh, g, gh,** and **ṅ** are pronounced from the throat in much the same manner as in English—**k** as in *kind,* **kh** as in *pack-horse,* **g** as in *god,* **gh** as in *bighearted,* and **ṅ** as in *sing.*

The palatal consonants **c, ch, j, jh,** and **ñ** are pronounced: **c** as in *chant,* **ch** as in *thatch hut,* **j** as in *joy,* **jh** as in *bridgehead,* and **ñ** as in *banyan.*

The retroflex consonants **ṭ, ṭh, ḍ, ḍh,** and **ṇ,** and also the rare vowel **ÿ**, are pronounced with the tip of the tongue turned up and drawn back against the dome of the palate: **ṭ** as in *temple,* **ṭh** as in *light-hearted,* **ḍ** as in *devotee,* **ḍh** as in *Godhead,* **ṇ** as in *nectar,* and **ÿ** as in *love.*

The dental consonants **t, th, d, dh** and **n** are pronounced in the same manner as the celebrals, but with the tip of the tongue against the inside of the upper teeth.

The labial consonants **p, ph, b, bh,** and **m** are pronounced with the lips: **p** as in *perfect,* **ph** as in *uphold,* **b** as in *boon,* **bh** as in *subhead,* and **m** as in *mantra.*

The semivowels **y, r, l,** and **v** are pronounced as in *yoga, respect, love,* and *vow*.

The sibilants **s, ṣ,** and **ś** are pronounced: **s** as in *soul,* **ṣ** as in *shine* but with the tip of the tongue

turned up and drawn back against the dome of the palate, and **ś** as in *shine* but the tip of the tongue against the inside of the upper teeth.

Bengali and Oriya sounds that are pronounced differently from Sanskrit are:

Short **a** is pronounced like the *o* in the Southern British pronunciation of *hot;* **ai** like the *oy* in *boy.* In Bengali, the final **a** of many words is silent.

When between two vowels, **ḍ** is pronounced similarly to the *r* in *red;* **ph** is pronounced as *f;* **v** is pronounced as *b,* except after *s, ṣ,* or *ś,* when it becomes almost silent.

M is pronounced as in *mantra,* except after *s, ṣ, ś,* and *kṣ,* in which cases it becomes almost silent, and after *d, ḍ, ḍh, dha, t, th, ṭ,* and *ṭh,* when it becomes almost silent and doubles the consonant it follows (e.g., *padma* is pronounced approximately *padda*).

When at the beginning of a word, and after *l* and *r,* **y** is pronounced as *j.* After other consonants, it becomes almost silent and doubles the consonant it follows (e.g., *anya* is approximately pronounced *anna*). After vowels it is pronounced as in *prayer.*

S, ṣ, and **ś** are each pronounced as in *she;* and **kṣa** as *kha.*

Glossary

Text within quotation marks immediately following an entry word is a literal translation thereof. Only contextual meanings of Sanskrit words are given.

108—*See* **Aṣṭottara-śata.**

A—*(Sanskrit)* a prefix denoting negation. Examples: *asat*—false, not *sat* (real); *acit*—material, not *cit* (conscious). When preceding a vowel, the prefix becomes *an.* Examples: *anartha*—an obstruction to *artha* (that which is desirable); *anitya*—temporary, not *nitya* (eternal).

Abhakti—non-*bhakti;* the opposite or absence of devotional service.

Abhidheya—"to be named or mentioned"; (1) devotional service; (2) *sādhana-bhakti. See also* **Prayojana; Sādhana-bhakti; Sambandha.**

Absolute Truth—an English rendering of *Brahman;* (1) the ultimate source of everything; (2) the supreme independent reality. *See also* **Supreme Personality of Godhead.**

Ācāra—behavior, especially that in accord with *śāstra-vidhi. See also* **Sadācāra.**

Ācārya—(1) a guru who has realized the import of *śāstra,* and by practice and precept establishes *siddhānta* and *ācāra;* (2) institutional head of a *sampradāya* or religious institution; (3) name or a part thereof for teachers, or persons descended from teachers.

(His Divine Grace) A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami (Śrīla) Prabhupāda—(1896–1977) the founder-*ācārya* of ISKCON, and most prominent of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's disciples in the era after his disappearance.

Acintya—inconceivable.

Acintya-bhedābheda-tattva—the doctrine of inconceivable simultaneous oneness and difference (of Godhead and His energies, and forms of Godhead); the philosophical system taught by Lord Caitanya. *See also* **Tattva.**

Adhikāra—qualification, level of eligibility.

Adhikārī—"eligible person"; (1) an epithet denoting a devotee's level of spiritual advancement, as in *kaniṣtha-, madhyama-, and uttama-adhikārī* (see individual terms); (2) designation of a married male devotee, as in the name Kṛṣṇa dāsa Adhikārī.

Adhokṣaja—"imperceptible to mundane vision"; Bhagavān.

Ādi-Śaṅkarācārya—(686–718) the original Śaṅkarācārya, as distinguished from *ācāryas* in

his guru-*paramparā,* who to this day also use the title Śaṅkarācārya.

Ādi-Varāha—"the original boar," the boar avatar of Lord Viṣṇu.

Advaita—"nonduality," oneness; (1) a name for the Supreme Lord; (2) *advaita-vāda.*

Advaita (Ācārya/Prabhu)—an avatar of the Supreme Lord, and an intimate associate of Lord Caitanya.

Advaita-vāda—*See* **Māyāvāda.**

Advaya—*(adj.)* nondual, absolute.

Advaya-jñāna—(1) knowledge that there is no difference between Kṛṣṇa and His names, forms, qualities, weapons, and so on, and that anything pertaining to Him is of the same spiritual nature; (2) the object of that knowledge, who is nondifferent from it, namely Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This meaning is often conveyed by the term *advaya-jñāna-tattva* (see SB 1.2.11).

Āgama—a class of scripture, complementary to the original Vedas, that sets forth theology and practical directions on worship. The Āgamas are classified according to three categories: Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva, and Śākta.

Agha, Baka, Pūtanā—three demons who entered Vṛndāvana and were killed by Kṛṣṇa.

Ahaṅgrahopāsanā—a strain of impersonalism whereby the worshiper accepts or conceptualizes himself as identical to the object of worship. (*Aham*—I; *g raha*—accepting; *upāsanā*—worship)

Ajña-rūḍhi—"the meaning (*rūḍhi*) of a word accepted by the less intelligent (*ajña*)"; the conventional, external meaning of a word. *See also* **Vidvad-rūḍhi.**

Ākhḍā—temple with residential quarters for renunciants, particularly of the type inhabited by *bābājīs* in Bengal and Orissa. *See also* **Maṭha.**

Akiñcana—possessionless. A synonym of *niṣkiñcana.*

Alaṅkāra-śāstra—the body of Vedic works that discuss *kavya* (poetry), which is defined as *rasātmika-vākya* (words having *rasa* as their essence). Thus discussion of *rasa* is necessary in the study of poetry. (*Alaṅkāra*— decoration)

Ālvār—one of twelve celebrated ancient saints of the Śrī *sampradāya.*

Āmnāya—the message of *śāstra* as received through *paramparā.*

Ānanda—happiness.

Anartha—"(that which is) useless or harmful"; in Gauḍīya theology it denotes an activity, attitude, or tendency that is an impediment to devotional advancement (e.g., gambling, lust).

Anartha-nivṛtti—(1) the stage in devotional advancement in which *anarthas* are transcended and overcome; (2) disappearance of all unwanted contamination within the heart. *See also* **Artha-pravṛtti.**

Annakūṭa—annual festival held to celebrate Govardhana-*pūjā,* Kṛṣṇa's worship of Govardhana. Cooked rice (*anna*) is stacked to resemble a hill (*kūṭa*—pile), and many other preparations are made for the Lord's pleasure.

Antaryāmī—*See* **Paramātmā.**

Anvaya—(1) the natural sequence of words; (2) *(in Sanskrit exegesis)* words of verses syntactically repositioned and presented in prose, to make their meaning clearer.

Anyābhilāṣa—any desire other than for satisfying Kṛṣṇa. (*Anya*—other; *abhilāṣa*—desire)*

Anyābhilāṣī—a person cultivating desires other than to serve Kṛṣṇa.

Aparādha—offense. *See also* **Nāmāparādha; Vaiṣṇava-aparādha.**

Apa-sampradāya—deviant sect. *See also* *Sampradāya.*

Apa-siddhānta—incorrect philosophical conclusion. *See also* **Siddhānta.**

Appearance—Āvirbhāva (q.v).

Aprākṛta—"transcendental to matter."

Ārati—(in Bengali, Hindi, and other Indian languages; derived from the Sanskrit word *ārātrika*) ceremony of worship (most commonly performed in public or household temples for worship of deities), the essential part of which is offering a lighted ghee- or oil-lamp by waving or circling it before the worshiped person or object. Often other items, such as incense, water, flowers, and fans, are also offered, and accompanying mantras chanted.

Arcana—procedures for worship, especially of the deity of the Lord. *See also* **Deity; Pūjā.**

Ardha Kumbha-melā—*See* **Kumbha-melā.**

Arjuna—the devotee and intimate friend to whom Kṛṣṇa spoke *Bhagavad-gītā.*

Artha—purpose, motive, meaning, reason, money, etc. *See also* **Dharma-artha-kāma-mokṣa.**

Artha-pravṛtti—(1) progress toward the actual goal of life; (2) realization of and entrance into one's eternal position of servitude to Kṛṣṇa and entrance into His pastimes. *See also* **Anartha-nivṛtti.**

Ārya—(1) respectable, righteous person; (2) one interested in higher values of life and in advancing spiritually; (3) upper-caste person of North India; (4) member of the Ārya Samāj.

Āsana—sitting mat, sitting place, seat, place.

Asat—incorrect, improper, bad, false, ephemeral, non-existent, untrue.

Asat-saṅga—unholy association.

Āśīrvāda-patra—certificate of blessing.

Āśrama—any of the four spiritual orders in the Vedic social system: *brahmacarya, gṛhastha, vānaprastha,* and *sannyāsa. See also* **Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Āśraya—(1) shelter; (2) a receptacle or recipient in which any quality or article is retained or received.

Āśraya-vigraha—"the form of the recipient," the receptacle of *prema*; (1) Śrī Rādhā; (2) one's own guru; (3) any advanced devotee.* *See also* **Viṣaya-vigraha.**

Aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā—pastimes of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa during the eight periods of the day, different activities being performed during different periods, as outlined in *Govinda-līlāmṛta* and other confidential works; the highest object of contemplation for Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.

Aṣṭottara-śata—"108." It is considered an auspicious number and appears in many contexts. For instance, there are 108 principal *Upaniṣads,* 108 principal *gopīs,* 108 beads in the standard rosary of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, and many compilations of 108 names for various deities.

Asura—(1) person of demonic mentality, specifically one who is opposed to Viṣṇu and Viṣṇu-*bhakti;* (2) one of the cosmic demonic beings often referred to in the Vedic literature.

Avatar—(Sanskrit: *avatāra*—descent) (1) descent from the spiritual world of the Supreme Lord or a special devotee; (2) a personage thus descended.

Avidyā—ignorance.

Āvirbhāva—Vaiṣṇava terminology for the apparent birth of a Viṣṇu-avatar or an exalted devotee, in contradistinction to the birth of conditioned souls forced into various material bodies according to their karmic reactions. Rendered in English as *appearance,* because such eternal personages, rather than coming into existence, become manifest to mortal vision like the appearance of the sun each morning. *See also* **Tirobhāva.**

Āvirbhāva-tithi—anniversary of the appearance of a Viṣṇu-avatar or an exalted devotee. *See also* **Tirobhāva-tithi; Tithi.**

Bābājī—(1) a celibate devotee who lives extremely simply and austerely, his life devoted to spiritual practices; (2) an imitator who accepts the simple dress of a *bābājī* yet does not practice the prescribed rigid renunciation. *See also* **Bhek.**

Babu—(1) *(especially in Bengali society)* an honorific appellation for an esteemed gentleman; (2) (a) a foppish well-to-do sense enjoyer, or (b) *(Gauḍīya Maṭha usage; informal, derogatory)* a materialistic devotee whose behavior resembles that of sense enjoyers.

Bāg-bazar—the area of Calcutta to which Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha relocated in 1930.

Bāhādura—"hero"; common appendage to titles of men of *kṣatriya* caste or in high administrative posts.

(Śrīla) Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa—(eighteenth century) a prominent Gauḍīya *ācārya* best known for his composition of *Govinda-bhāṣya* (q.v.).

Bāla-Gopāla—(1) Kṛṣṇa in boyhood; (2) common deity form of Kṛṣṇa in boyhood.

Bali-dāna—offering of goats and other animals in sacrifice to certain demigods.

Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣad—Bengali Literature Association.

Bhadra-loka—the modernized Bengali middle class, a social elite that first emerged in the mid-nineteenth century. (*Bhadra*—gentle, polite)

Bhagavad-gītā—sacred teachings of Kṛṣṇa spoken to Arjuna on the Battlefield of Kuruksetra, which expound devotional service as the essence and ultimate goal of all knowledge, and the only means to attain the highest spiritual perfection.

Bhagavān—"possessor of all opulences in full"; (1) Supreme Personality of Godhead; (2) highly exalted personality.

Bhāgavat(a)—"in relation to Bhagavān"; (1) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam;* (2) great devotee.

Bhāgavata-dharma—"practices of great devotees" or "dharma in relation to Bhagavān"; Kṛṣṇa consciousness, pure devotional service.

Bhāi—brother.

Bhajana—(1) dedicated life of intense devotional service based on hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa and remembering Him; (2) *(mainly Hindi usage)* devotional song.

Bhajana-kuṭīra—a hut used normally by a single sadhu for his residence and *bhajana.*

Bhajanānandī—"one who takes pleasure in *bhajana*"; a devotee who withdraws from the world to concentrate on devotional practices. *See also* **Nirjana-bhajana**.

Bhakta—a devotee of the Supreme Lord. *See also* **Vaiṣṇava.**

Bhakti—*See* **Devotional Service.**

Bhakti Bhavan—Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's house in Calcutta.

Bhakti-kuṭī—"cottage of devotion"; Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's place of *bhajana* and residence in Purī.

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu—(The ocean of the nectar of devotional mellows) Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's definitive treatise on the science of devotional service.

Bhakti-ratnākara—(The jewel-mine of devotion) a seventeenth-century biography of Lord Caitanya and some of His principal associates, by Śrī Narahari Cakravartī.

Bhakti Vijaya Bhavan—Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's house at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha.

(Śrīla) Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura—(1838–1915) the inaugurator of the modern-day *śuddha-bhakti* movement, and the father of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Bhārata(-varṣa)—the *śāstrīya* name for India.

Bhāṣya—commentary, especially the original commentary, on a scripture.

Bhāva—emotion, mood, attitude, feeling. In Gauḍīya theology it also refers to the initial stage of ecstatic feelings preceding the full manifestion of *prema*.

Bhavan(a)—house, residence, building, mansion.

Bhava-sāgara—"the ocean of material existence." *See also* **Sāgara.**

Bhāvuka—"a person imbued with *bhāva*"; *(common usage)* a sentimentalist.

Bhek—apparel, particularly the simple short cloth worn by *bābājīs.* "Giving *bhek*" means to induct into *bābājī* life.

Bhikṣā—(1) the act of begging or requesting, particularly a renunciant's practice of begging door to door for alms; (2) alms collected by such begging; (3) a renunciant's acceptance of a meal in a householder's home.

Bhikṣu—"beggar"; mendicant or sannyasi.

Bhoga—(1) material enjoyment; (2) items specifically meant to be offered for the Lord's enjoyment, such as food or flowers.

Bhogī—an enjoyer.

Bodily conception (of life)—the basic misapprehension of every materially conditioned living entity that the body is the self and that life is meant only for maintenance of, and enjoyment through and in relation to, the body.

(Lord) Brahmā—the demigod who is the first created living being and secondary creator in each material universe. In this particular universe, he is also the original preceptor of the Brahma-Mādhva-Gauḍīya *sampradāya,* the discipular line descending from himself through Madhvācārya to Lord Caitanya and beyond.

Brahmacārī—a member of the first order of Vedic spiritual life (*brahmacarya*), i.e., a celibate student of a guru. *See also* **Āśrama; Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Brahmacarya—celibate student life, the first *āśrama* of the Vedic social system. *See also* **Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Brahma-gāyatrī—the most prominent Vedic mantra for worshiping the Supreme Lord. It is also called Veda-mātā (mother of the Vedas). *See also* **Gāyatrī.**

Brahmajyoti—the spiritual effulgence emanating from the transcendental body of Lord Kṛṣṇa and illuminating the spiritual world. *See also* **Brahman.**

Brāhma-muhūrta—the period of day, auspicious for spiritual practices, spanning from approximately ninety to forty-five minutes before sunrise.

Brahman—(1) Absolute Truth; (2) the state of spiritual existence; (3) the impersonal all-pervasive aspect of the Absolute Truth.

Brāhmaṇa—(1) a priest or intellectual fixed in *sattva-guṇa* and knowledge of Brahman, and thus qualified as a member of the first occupational division of the Vedic social system; (2) erroneous designation of a certain caste or members thereof claiming to be *brāhmaṇas* solely on the basis of heredity. *See also* **Varṇa; Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Brāhmaṇatva—the status of being a *brāhmaṇa.*

Brāhmaṇī—wife of a *brāhmaṇa.*

Brahma-rākṣasa—a powerful and malicious ghost of a *brāhmaṇa.*

Brahma-saṁhitā—an ancient scripture (only the fifth chapter of which is extant) highly regarded by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Brahmo—a member of the Brahmo Samāj, a religious group formed in Bengal in the nineteenth century. (See vol. 2, pp. 3–4)

Cādar—shawl.

Caitanya-bhāgavata—the Bengali biography by Śrīla Vṛṇdāvana dāsa Ṭhākura (completed in 1575) about Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, principally describing His pastimes in Navadvīpa before He accepted *sannyāsa*.

Caitanya-caritāmṛta—the Bengali biography composed by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī (some forty years after *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*) about Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, principally describing His pastimes after He accepted *sannyāsa.*

Caitanya Mahāprabhu—(1486–1534) recognized by Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas to be the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, manifested as His own devotee to impart love of Himself, especially by *saṅkīrtana.* He is the root of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma and is the Gauḍīyas' object of worship. In English He is often referred to as Lord Caitanya.

(Śrī) Caitanya Maṭha—established in 1918 in Māyāpur by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, this became the parent Maṭha of subsequent branches of the original Gauḍīya Maṭha organization. Today it remains the headquarters of one of the two entities spawned by the first bifurcation of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's institution.

Caṇḍāla—an outcaste of the lowest category.

Caraṇāmṛta—water, sometimes mixed with other substances, that was used to bathe either the Lord (usually in His deity form) or the feet of a devotee.

Caritra—character, biography.

Caste Goswamis—(Bengali: *jāta-gosāñis)* seminal descendants of the principal followers of Lord Caitanya who claim the right to initiate disciples solely on the basis of that identification.

Cātur-māsya—"four-month period"; the four months, roughly coincident with the rainy season, during which special austerities are observed by followers of Vedic culture.

Chand Kazi—a Muslim magistrate of Nadia who had initially opposed Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement but whose mind changed after discussing with the Lord. (See Cc 1.17)

Conditioned—*(Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's usage)* pertaining or subject to the conditions of material life.

(Indian National) Congress—the predominant organization seeking Indian independence from British rule.

Dā—*(Bengali)* suffix appended to a name of an elder brother or a male of similar status, connoting both affection and respect.

Daiva-varṇāśrama-dharma—the authentic caste system, based not on birth (in contradistinction to *āsura-varṇāśrama,* prominent in Kali-yuga) but on one's qualities and activities. *See also* **Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Dakṣiṇā—an offering, in cash or kind, presented to a guru, a *brāhmaṇa,* or a similarly worshipable person.

Daṇḍa—(1) stick; (2) staff carried by a sannyasi. *See also* **Ekadaṇḍa; Tridaṇḍa.**

Daṇḍavat—"like a rod." In Bengali, this word is used for *daṇḍavat-praṇāma* (prostration offered by falling flat on the ground).

Darśana—(1) vision; (2) philosophy, or a philosophical system; (3) audience of the Supreme Lord or His representative.

Dāsa—*(generally lowercase)* (1) servant; (2) surname given to a devotee at initiation, denoting him as a servant of Kṛṣṇa; (3) *(capital)* family name in Bengal and Orissa.

Daśakam—poem consisting of ten verses.

Dāsya-rasa—the mellow of affectionate servitude. *See also* **Rasa.**

Deity—(1) the manifestation of the Supreme Lord as a scripturally authorized form for accepting worship; (2) worshipable forms of pure devotees and demigods. The deity form of the Lord appears in eight materials: stone, wood, metal, earth, paint, sand, the mind, or jewels (see SB 11.27.12).

Demigod—a resident of the higher planets. Principal demigods are assigned roles by the Supreme Lord for overseeing universal affairs, and are worshiped for material boons by materialistic followers of Vedic culture.

Desire tree—a spiritual tree that fulfils the desires of its supplicants.

Deva—(1) the Supreme Lord, a demigod, or a godly person; (2) honorific suffix for the Supreme Lord, a demigod, or a godly male.

Devī—(1) goddess or godly female; (2) honorific suffix for a goddess or godly female.

Devotional service—the process of worshiping the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī

Kṛṣṇa, by dedicating one's thoughts, words, and actions to Him in loving submission. *See also* **Kṛṣṇa consciousness.**

Dhāma—the transcendental abode of the Lord, eternally existing as the spiritual world beyond the material universes and also manifested within the material world as certain holy places.

Dharma—(1) religious laws described in *śāstra;* (2) ordained duties as described in *śāstra* for specific roles within *varṇāśrama* society, e.g., *sannyāsa-dharma, strī-dharma* (women's duties); (3) every living being's eternal, constitutional occupation of service to the Supreme Lord. *See also* **Dharma-artha-kāma-mokṣa.**

Dharma-artha-kāma-mokṣa—*(conventional usage)* mundane piety, economic development, sense enjoyment, and liberation, the four aspects of sub-transcendental Vedic religious endeavor.

Dharmaśālā—charitable lodge for pilgrims.

Dhārmika—adjectival form of (the word) *dharma.*

Dīkṣā—initiation. In the Gauḍīya Maṭha, *dīkṣā* refers to what in ISKCON is known as "second" or *brāhmaṇa* initiation.

Dīkṣā-guru—initiating spiritual master.

Dīkṣita—(1) a person who has received *dīkṣā;* (2) the state of having received *dīkṣā.*

Disappearance—*tirobhāva* (q.v.).

District—administrative subunits established by the British in the provinces of India. Most were named after the headquarters of jurisdiction (for instance, the headquarters of Jessore District was the town of Jessore).

Duḥkha—unhappiness, misery, suffering, pain.

Durgā—Lord Śiva's consort, the goddess personifying and overseeing the material energy, who is worshiped by materialists for material boons. *See also* **Māyā.**

Dust—Gauḍīyas highly regard particles of earth taken from holy places or the lotus feet of elevated devotees. Placing such dust on one's head and/ or tongue demonstrates submission and humility and is recommended in scripture (e.g., SB 5.12.12 and Cc 3.16.60) as important for spiritual progress.

Dvāpara-yuga—the third in the universal cycle of four ages, characterized by a further one-fourth decrease in *dhārmika* principles from the preceding age, Tretā-yuga (q.v.).

Ekadaṇḍa—the symbolic staff composed of one (*eka*) bamboo rod (*daṇḍa*) carried by sannyasis of the Mādhva and Śaṅkara schools.

Ekadaṇḍī—"one with an *ekadaṇḍa*"; a sannyasi of the Mādhva or Śaṅkara *sampradāya.*

Ekādaśa-bhāva—the eleven characteristics of a devotee in the perfectional stage of directly serving Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in a spiritual body as a maidservant.

Ekādaśī—eleventh day of both the waxing and waning moon, most favorable for cultivating Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti,* during which Vaiṣṇavas increase their spiritual practices and fast from at least grains and beans.

Enchantress—*(Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's usage)* when used without a qualifier, refers to the personality of illusion, Māyā (q.v.).

Flat-rice—(Bengali: *ciḍā*) pre-boiled and pounded rice needing only a few minutes of soaking to become edible, thus a simple and commonplace preparation.

Gadādhara—"club-holder"; a name for the Supreme Lord.

Gadādhara Paṇḍita—a specific associate and the internal potency of Lord Caitanya.

Gāndharvikā—Rādhā, the source of Gāndharva-*vidyā* (arts and skills such as music and dancing), whereby She pleases Kṛṣṇa unlimitedly.

Gaṇeśa—the elephant-headed demigod. A son of Lord Śiva, he is supplicated for material opulence and removing obstacles to material endeavors, and is the scribe who recorded the *Mahābhārata.*

Gaṅgā—Ganges River.

Garuḍa—the eagle who is the carrier of Lord Viṣṇu.

Garuḍa-stambha—at the entrance to a Viṣṇu temple, the column bearing the form of Garuḍa.

Gauḍa, Gauḍa-deśa, Gauḍa-maṇḍala—the historical and spiritual name for the region roughly corresponding to West Bengal, India, particularly denoting it as a principal place of pastimes of Lord Caitanya and His associates.

Gauḍīya—*(commonly understood meanings)* (1) of or pertaining to Gauḍa, an ancient city in Bengal; (2) pertaining to the Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* derived from Lord Caitanya (e.g., Gauḍīya *siddhānta*); (3) a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava; (4) the erstwhile flagship periodical of the Gauḍīya Maṭha; *(esoteric meaning)* (5) a devotee of Rādhārāṇī.

Gauḍīya Maṭha—(1) the organization founded by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī; (2) a

branch monastery of the aforesaid organization; (3) the generic term for the diaspora of organizations consisting of the first two branches that sundered from the original Gauḍīya Maṭha, and for subsequent groups (other than ISKCON) formed by discipular descendants of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī; (4) a branch monastery of the aforementioned diaspora.

Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava—(1) a member of the Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* originating from Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu; (2) of or pertaining to that *sampradāya.*

Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma, Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism—the practice and culture of devotional service in pursuance of the principles given by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Gaura, Gauracandra, Gaurahari, Gaurāṅga, Gaurasundara—names of Lord Caitanya referring to His beautiful golden form.

Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā—the book by Śrī Kavi-karṇapūra (written 1567 AD) that reveals the identities in Kṛṣṇa-*līlā* of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's principal associates.

Gaura-jayantī, Gaura-paurṇamāsī, Gaura-pūrṇimā—the *āvirbhāva-tithi* of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the full-moon day in the month of Phālguna. (*Paurṇamāsī, pūrṇimā*—full-moon day)

(Śrīla) Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī—(1838–1915) the guru of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Gaura-nāgarīs, Gaurāṅga-nāgarīs—a heretic Gauḍīya sect.

Gāyatrī—a mantra recited within the mind by suitably initiated persons at sunrise, midday, and sunset. *See also* **Brahma-gāyatrī.**

Giridhārī—a name of Kṛṣṇa meaning "the lifter of Govardhana Hill."

Gītā—*Bhagavad-gītā.*

Gīta-govinda—a highly esoteric and transcendentally erotic poem composed by Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī (c. eleventh century) that describes intimate pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Its verses and themes were repeatedly heard, sung, and meditated on by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and inspired the composition of innumerable Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *kīrtanas.*

Gītāvalī—a collection of songs by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

Godhead—*See* Absolute Truth.

Godruma, Godrumadvīpa—an area of Navadvīpa-*dhāma.* Therein Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura constructed his residence and place of *bhajana* named Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja.

Gokula—(1) Vṛndāvana manifested within the material world as a facsimile of Goloka; (2) in Vraja-*maṇḍala,* the particular village that was the site of Kṛṣṇa's residence during much of His childhood.

Goloka, Goloka Vṛndāvana—the topmost section of the spiritual world.

Goloka-darśana—spiritual outlook.

(Śrīla) Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī—one of the Six Gosvāmīs. He is known as the *smṛty-ācārya* of the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* for compiling *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* and *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā* (books of rituals and ceremonies for Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas).

Gopī—a female cowherd, particularly one of the spiritual cowherd damsels who serve Kṛṣṇa in Goloka or Gokula.

Gopījanavallabha, Gopīvallabha—names of Kṛṣṇa meaning "lover of the *gopīs.*"

Gopīśvara—an epithet of Lord Śiva, and particularly a form that is worshiped in a specific temple in Mahāvana, Vraja-*maṇḍala.* The name means that he is the form of Lord Śiva (*īśvara*) as worshiped by the *gopīs.*

Gopīvallabhpur—the seat of the Śyāmānandī sect (q.v.)

Gosvāmī—(1) one who fully controls his senses; (2) title designating a sannyasi; (3) adjective denoting the Six Gosvāmīs.

Gosvāmī literature—that written by the Six Gosvāmīs. It may also indicate works of other major Gauḍīya *ācāryas,* especially Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura and those preceding him.

Goswami—a surname of families often claiming spiritual privilege on the basis of birth. *See also* **Caste Goswamis**.

Govardhana—(1) the especially sacred hill within Vraja-*maṇḍala* that is nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa; (2) the village adjacent to Govardhana Hill.

Govardhana-śilā, Giridhārī-śilā—any stone from Govardhana Hill. Many Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas worship such *śilās.*

Govinda—a name of Kṛṣṇa meaning "He who gives pleasure to the land, the cows, and the senses."

Govinda-bhāṣya—the gloss on *Vedānta-sūtra* compiled by the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa Prabhu.

Govinda-līlāmṛta—the seminal work by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī **that** details Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā. See also* **Aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā.**

Grantha—book.

Gṛhastha—(1) a married person acting in accordance with Vedic religious principles for the purpose of spiritual elevation; (2) the second *āśrama* of Vedic spiritual life. *See also* **Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Guṇa—(1) attribute, quality; (2) one of the three cosmic behavorial influences—i) goodness (*sattva*), ii) passion (*rajas)*, and iii) ignorance (*tamas*)—characterized respectively by i) detachment, serenity, and spiritual inclination; ii) attachment and inordinate endeavor for sense gratification; and iii) madness, indolence, and sleep. These are described in considerable depth in *Bhagavad-gītā.*

Guru-Gaurāṅga—guru and Gaurāṇga. Here *guru* principally refers to one's immediate guru. In the Gauḍīya Maṭha, deities of Guru-Gaurāṅga are usually presented as a wooden form of Gaurāṇga and a pictorial image of the guru(s).

Gurukula—a guru's ashram, wherein young *brahmacārīs* reside and receive education.

Guru-paramparā—the chain of preceptorial succession from guru to disciple to granddisciple, and so on, through which transcendental knowledge is conveyed. *See* **Sampradāya.**

Guru-varga—present and previous gurus taken as a collective group. (*Varga*— division, class, set, group)

Gurvaṣṭaka—eight prayers composed by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura in glorification of the guru.

Halavā—dessert made from semolina (or other grain), ghee, sugar, and water.

Hanumān—the most famous monkey-servant of Lord Rāma.

Hare—(1) vocative form of *Harā* (Lord Kṛṣṇa's internal energy, i.e., Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī); (2) vocative form of *Hari.*

Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra—the great incantation for deliverance: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Hari—"He who takes away [obstacles to spiritual progress]"; the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Hari-bhakti-vilāsa—the treatise composed by Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī that delineates and explains rules, regulations, and rituals for Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.

Harijana—"a person of God"; (1) a devotee, (2) a common misnomer for an outcaste or low-class person.

Hari-kathā—discussion of the glories, activities, and qualities of Hari. *See* **Kṛṣṇa-kathā.**

Harināma—(1) the holy name(s) of the Supreme Lord; (2) initiation by a guru into the chanting of the holy name (known in ISKCON as "first initiation").

Harināmāmṛta-vyākaraṇa—"the grammar which is comprised of the nectar of the holy names"; an instructional Sanskrit grammar composed by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī.

Harināma-saṅkīrtana—*See* Saṅkīrtana.

Harmonist—the English magazine of the Gauḍīya Maṭha at the time of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.

Himācala—another name for the Himālayas.

Hiraṇyakaśipu—the ancient despot infamous for persecuting his five-year-old son, Prahlāda, because of Prahlāda's Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti*.

Impersonalism—*See* Māyāvāda.

Initiation—*See* Dīkṣā.

ISKCON—International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Founded in 1966 in New York by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, it is the principal manifestation of what is popularly known as the Hare Krishna movement.

Iṣṭa-goṣṭhī—discussion of spiritual topics among devotees of similar ideals.

Īśvara—"controller"; in general Hindu usage, often denotes Lord Śiva as the controller of the material energy; particularly in Vaiṣṇava parlance, refers to the Supreme Lord, Hari.

(Śrīla) Īśvara Purī—a disciple of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī (q.v.), and the initiating guru of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Jaḍa—inanimate, material, foolish.

Jagad-darśana—material outlook.

Jagad-guru—"the preceptor of the universe"; one whose instructions may be beneficially followed by everyone within the universe.

Jagāi and Mādhāi—the criminal brothers who were reformed by the intervention of Lord

Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda (narrated in *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*).

Jagannātha—a name of Kṛṣṇa meaning "Lord of the universe." It particularly refers to a specific deity form of Kṛṣṇa, whose large temple and elaborate worship therein at Purī, Orissa, is especially famous.

(Śrīla) Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī—(nineteenth century) a great Gauḍīya *ācārya* who was instrumental in locating the apperance site of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Jagannātha Miśra—the father of Lord Caitanya.

Jagannātha-vallabha Udyāna—a garden in Purī.

Jagat—"universe." Unless otherwise specified, it generally refers to the material world.

Janmāṣṭamī—the *āvirbhāva-tithi* of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Japa—soft recitation of the Lord's holy names, usually on beads. *See also* **Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra.**

Japa-mālā—string of beads used for counting *japa.*

Jāta-gosāñis—*See* Caste Goswamis.

Jaya—victory. Often used as an expression of praise.

Jaya-dhvani—recitation of the names of worshipable persons, places, etc., each utterance being followed by group exclamation of *Jaya!* (*Dhvani*—sound)

Jīva—the living entity, who is an eternal individual soul, an atomic particle of the Supreme Lord's energy.

(Śrīla) Jīva Gosvāmī—(1511–1608) one of the Six Gosvāmīs. In his writings he detailed the principles of Gauḍīya philosophy.

Jīvan-mukta—a person liberated in this very lifetime. *See also* **Mukti.**

Jñāna—(1) knowledge; (2) abstruse spiritual knowledge, based on Vedic texts, purported to lead to liberation.

Jñāna-kāṇḍa—(1) the portion of Vedic literature that presents abstruse spiritual knowledge for achieving liberation from material existence; (2) the path of dedication to actions in pursuance of that knowledge and goal.

Jñānī—(1) *(conventional usage)* a knowledgeable person; (2) *(primary usage of Gauḍīya*

Vaiṣṇavas) a seeker of the absolute truth through philosophical speculation, usually with an impersonalist bent; adherent of the *jñāna-kāṇḍa;* (3) *(ontological usage)* devotee in full knowledge of Kṛṣṇa as the Absolute Truth.

Jyotiṣa—the Vedic science of astronomy and astrology.

Jyotiṣī—a practitioner of *jyotiṣa.*

Kaccha—the part of a dhoti or sari that is folded and tucked in.

Kali—vice personified.

Kālī—a fierce form of Durgā (q.v.).

Kali-yuga—the present age characterized by hypocrisy, quarrel, and *adharma,* which began five thousand years ago and is the last in the universal cycle of four ages.

Kāma—(1) desire, either mundane or spiritual; (2) lust. *See also* **Dharma-artha-kāma-mokṣa.**

Kaniṣṭha-adhikārī—a neophyte devotee, on the lowest level of devotional service, with little understanding of *tattva* and having a materialistic outlook.

Karatālas—small hand cymbals played in accompaniment to *kīrtana.*

Karma—(1) action; (2) fruitive activity performed in accordance to *karma-kāṇḍa* injunctions; (3) the principle governing material action and reaction; (4) reactions to previously performed activities; destiny.

Karma-kāṇḍa—(1) the path of fruitive activities, particularly sacrificial rites, for achieving resultant sense gratification; (2) the portion of Vedic literature that recommends performance of such activities.

Karma-kāṇḍīya—pertaining to *karma-kāṇḍa.*

Karmī, Karma-kāṇḍī—a follower of *karma-kāṇḍa,* engaged in materialistic work and having little or no spiritual inclination.

Kārṣṇa—(1) a devotee of Kṛṣṇa; (2) a member of Kṛṣṇa's family.

Kārtika—the sacred month (mid-October to mid-November) of Dāmodara, the final and most important month of Cātur-māsya, during which Vaiṣṇavas traditionally reside in a holy place, especially Mathurā-Vṛndāvana, and perform extra austerities and spiritual practices.

Kārtika-vrata—special vows followed during Kārtika. Also known as Ürja-*vrata* or

Dāmodara-*vrata.*

Kathā—talk, discourse, story, topic, words, message. *See also* **Hari-kathā; Kṛṣṇa-kathā.**

Kātyāyanī—a name of Durgā (q.v.).

Kaupīna—loincloth. In Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, a sanctified *kaupīna* is a symbol of renunciation awarded to men entering *bābājī* life.

Kāyastha—a subcaste.*

Khol—*See* Mṛdaṅga.

Kīrtana—(1) chanting of the names and glories of the Supreme Lord; (2) a sung litany; (3) a specific song of glorification. *See also* **Bhajana; Saṅkīrtana.**

Kīrtanīyā—a performer of sung *kīrtana,* especially a lead singer.

Krishnanagar—a town near Māyāpur.

Kṛpā—mercy.

Kṛṣṇa—original, all-attractive form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness—acting in knowledge of one's relationship with Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Absolute Truth. *See also* **Devotional service.**

Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī—a name of many *bābājīs.* In *Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava* it mostly refers to the personal servant (1887–1915) of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

(Śrīla) Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī—(?–1582) the author of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (for which he is primarily known) and also *Śrī Govinda-līlāmṛta,* another seminal Gauḍīya work.

Kṛṣṇa-kathā—a synonym of Hari-*kathā* (q.v.).

Kṣatriya—(1) a warrior and ruler; (2) the second occupational division of the Vedic social system. *See also* **Varṇa; Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Kuliyā—(1) the medieval name of the site of much of the present town of Navadvīpa; (2) the name usually used by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and his discipular followers to refer to the modern town of Navadvīpa, to avoid connoting it as the original Navadvīpa mentioned in old records as the birthplace of Lord Caitanya. (Most of those who reject Māyāpur as the birthplace of Lord Caitanya regard the location of Kuliyā as currently unascertainable.)

Kumbha-melā—a gargantuan month-long religious conclave held every twelve years at

Prayāga. Six years after each Kumbha-melā an Ardha (half) Kumbha-melā is held, which also attracts large crowds.

Kuṇḍa—a pond.

Kurukṣetra—the ancient place of pilgrimage that was also the site of the great Battle of Kurukṣetra, fought five thousand years ago (elaborately described in *Mahābhārata*).

Kuṭī, kuṭīra—hut, cottage.

Lābha-pūjā-pratiṣṭhā—"gain, worship, and fame," desire for which is mentioned by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu as three major obstacles on the path of Kṛṣṇa conscious progress (Cc 2.19.159).

Lakṣmaṇa—one of Lord Rāmacandra's three younger brothers. *See* Rāma.

Lakṣmī—the goddess of fortune and eternal consort of Lord Nārāyaṇa (Viṣṇu).

Līlā—(1) transcendental activities of Bhagavān or His liberated devotees. Such activities are conducted under the internal, pleasure-giving potency of Bhagavān, in contradistinction to the activities of conditioned souls, which are conducted under the external, pain-giving potency of Bhagavān; (2) a specific episode within the activities of the Supreme Lord or His liberated devotees.

Līlā-smaraṇa—contemplation of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, especially his Vraja-*līlā*. This arises naturally in the heart of a pure devotee, but is also attempted by certain Gauḍīya sects as a *sādhana* based on visualizing Kṛṣṇa's pastimes and one's role therein.

Lord Caitanya—*See* Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Madana-mohana—a name of Kṛṣṇa meaning "He who bewilders Cupid."

Mādhava—a name of Kṛṣṇa meaning "the husband of the goddess of fortune."

(Śrīla) Mādhavendra Purī—a great Gauḍīya *ācārya* who appeared prior to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He was the first Vaiṣṇava in the present era to manifest the sentiment of separation from Kṛṣṇa, which is the essence of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava ontology. He was also the guru of many prominent devotees, including Śrīla Īśvara Purī and Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu.

Madhura—*(adj.)* sweet.

Madhura-rasa, Mādhurya-rasa—"mellow of sweetness"; topmost *rasa* of sweet exchanges between Kṛṣṇa and His transcendental consorts or girlfriends (*gopīs*). *See also* **Rasa.**

Madhva, Madhvācārya—the great Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* of the twelfth (or thirteenth) century who

preached *dvaita-vāda,* the philosophy of difference between the Supreme Lord and all else that exists, He being absolutely independent and everything else fully dependent on Him.

Mādhva—pertaining to Madhva or to Vaiṣṇavism coming in his line.

Madhyama-adhikārī—an intermediate devotee, on the middle level of devotional service, who is a serious yet still not perfected *sādhaka.*

Mahā *(prefix)*—great.

Mahābhārata—the famous epic and seminal literature at the basis of Vedic culture; includes the *Bhagavad-gītā.*

Mahājana—"great person"; *(Vaiṣṇava usage)* a great devotee. It often refers to one of the twelve personages mentioned in SB 6.3.20.

Mahā-mantra—*See* Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra.

Mahānta—*(conventional usages)* (1) proprietor of a temple; (2) institutional head of a *maṭha; (ontological usage)* (3) the guru manifested as a great Vaiṣṇava, as distinguished from *caitya*-guru, the Lord in the heart, the other aspect of guru-*tattva* (see SB 11.29.6).

Mahāprabhu—*See* Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Mahā-puruṣa—*See* Mahājana.

Mahārāja—"great king"; (1) a title and term of address for a king; (2) a term of address for a sannyasi or saint; (3) used in conjunction with *guru* to accentuate the absolute majestry of the spiritual master; (4) a title and term of address for a *brāhmaṇa* cook.

Mahāśaya—venerable person (generally used as a title or mode of address).

Mahātmā—"great soul" (generally refers to a particularly venerable sadhu, or used as a title or mode of address for a venerable sadhu).

Mahotsava—festival.

Mālā—(1) garland, string of beads, necklace, rosary; (2) 108 recitations of the *mahā-mantra,* counted on a string of 108 beads.

Mālpuyā—a succulent sweet preparation, standard in Gauḍīya festivals, consisting of sweetened rice-flour puris soaked in thick sugar syrup. (ISKCON-style *mālpuyās* are usually soaked in thick sweet yogurt, and are referred to according to their Hindi name, *malpura.*)

Maṇḍala—(1) area; (2) surrounding district or territory.

Mandira—(1) *(primary usage)* temple; (2) any building or residence.

Maṅgala-ārati—the first *ārati* of the day, performed before dawn.

Maṅgalācaraṇa—a prayer to invoke auspiciousness at the beginning of an undertaking, by praising the Supreme Lord and His intimate devotees and seeking their blessings. Particularly (a) a recital before a formal religious talk, or (b) a poetic invocation preceding a written work.

Mañjarī(s)—the class, or a member thereof, of pre-pubescent female assistants to the principal *gopīs* in their service to Śrī Rādha-Kṛṣṇa.

Mano-'bhīṣṭa—the yearning (*abhīṣṭa*) of the heart (*manas*).

Mantra—a Vedic utterance that delivers the mind from illusion.

Mārga—path, way, method.

Mārjana—cleaning, purification.

Marwaris—a class of people originating in Marwar, Rajasthan, and now spread throughout India. Many are merchants, and their establishments dominate bazars in numerous Indian towns. Traditionally pious and inclined to give charity for religious causes, Marwaris were among the principal donors to Gauḍīya Maṭha activities, especially in Calcutta, where they comprised a significant community.

Maṭha—(1) a temple with an attached ashram for *brahmacārīs* and sannyasis; (2) monastery; (3) (*cap*) Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, or Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, or a branch thereof. *See also* **Ākhḍā.**

Maṭha-rakṣaka—"protector of the *maṭha,*" the devotee in charge of a particular Gauḍīya Maṭha. Usually rendered in English as "secretary" of a particular Gauḍīya Maṭha.

Maṭha-vāsī—a resident of a *maṭha.*

Mathurā—the sacred place where Lord Kṛṣṇa took birth and later returned to after performing childhood pastimes in Vṛṇdāvana. Today its extrinsic manifestation is a large town of the same name in Uttar Pradesh.

Mauna—silence, especially when adopted as a religious observance.

Māyā—"illusion"; (1) *(cap)* the personality of the Supreme Lord's material deluding potency; (2) *(lc)* illusion; forgetfulness of one's eternal relationship as servant of Kṛṣṇa. *See also* **Durgā**.

Māyāpur—the place within Navadvīpa-*dhāma* where Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared. According to modern political considerations it is presently in Nadia District, West Bengal.

Māyāvāda—(1) the philosphical thesis of absolute identity between *jīva* and Brahman, Brahman being considered formless and impersonal or void; (2) monism; (3) *(Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava usage)* in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and subsequent texts, it denotes the philosophy propagated by Ādi-Śaṅkarācārya (which among non-Gauḍiyās is generally known as *kevalādvaita-vāda* or *advaita-vāda*); (4) *(non-Gauḍīya usage)* a particular interpretation of *kevalādvaita-vāda. See also* **Ādi-Śaṅkarācārya.**

Māyāvādī—an adherent of Māyāvāda.

Mellow—Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's English rendition of the Sanskrit word *rasa.*

Mleccha—(1) barbarian; (2) a person outside Vedic culture, who does not follow Vedic principles.

Modes of material nature—*See* **Guṇa.**

Mokṣa—liberation from material existence, the cycle of birth and death. *See also* **Dharma-artha-kāma-mokṣa**.

Mṛdaṅga—a two-headed ellipsoidal drum used to accompany *kīrtana.*

Mukti—liberation, especially from the bondage of material existence (thus often used as a synonym for *mokṣa*).

Mukunda—a name of Kṛṣṇa meaning "bestower of liberation."

Mūla—(1) root, basis, foundation, cause, origin; (2) an original text (as distinguished from its translation or commentary).

Muni—a sage or ascetic.

Murāri Gupta—a contemporaneous associate of Lord Caitanya.

Nadia—the district of Bengal in which Navadvīpa is situated.

Nāgara—enjoyer, lady's man.

Nagara-saṅkīrtana—public congregational chanting of the Supreme Lord's holy names, usually on the streets of a city, town, or village. *See also* **Saṅkīrtana.**

Naiṣṭhika-brahmacārī—a lifelong celibate who never wastes his vital bodily fluids but sublimates sexual energy for transcendental purposes.

Nāma—"name"; *(Gauḍīya usage)* especially indicates the holy names of Kṛṣṇa.

Nāmābhāsa—(1) *(higher level)* a stage of chanting the holy names in which offenses are ceasing, and the platform of pure chanting is being approached; the chanter of the holy name has initial faith but also some desire for material pleasure or liberation, and is not knowledgable about the respective roles of the *jīva,* Bhagavān, and *māyā,* nor of *bhakti-tattva;* (2) *(lower level)* (as described in SB 6.2.14) chanting of the holy name by a person who has no faith in Kṛṣṇa, either as a coincidence (to indicate something else), in jest, derisively, or neglectfully. For further discussion, see Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *Harināma-cintāmaṇi,* chap. 3.

Nāmācārya—"*ācārya* of the chanting of the holy names"; an epithet for Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

Nāma-haṭṭa—"marketplace *(figurative)* of the holy name," conceived by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura as the initial preaching organization of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, it has become a blueprint for ongoing grassroots propagation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Nāmāparādha—(1) offense against the holy name; (2) offensive chanting of the holy name. *See also* **Harināma.**

Nāmī—the personage of the holy name.

Nandana—son.

Nārada-pañcarātra—the scripture revealed by Nārada Muni that, among other topics, delineates the recommended process of deity worship for Kali-yuga. *See also* **Pañcarātra.**

Nārāyaṇa—*See* Viṣnu.

(Śrīla) Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura—(c. 1550–1611) a great *ācārya* whose poems and songs encapsulate the essence of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma.

Nāṭya-mandira—"temple for drama and dancing." Common in Bengali temples in front of the main shrine, it is a roofed pavilion open on four sides, within which people have *darśana* of the deities, perform *kīrtana,* and dance in glorification of the Lord. In colloquial Bengali, the term is rendered *nāṭa-mandira.*

Navadvīpa—(1) Navadvīpa-*maṇḍala* or Navadvīpa-*dhāma;* (2) the present town of Navadvīpa, West Bengal. *See also* **Kuliyā.**

Navadvīpa-dhāma, Navadvīpa-maṇḍala—the sacred area conceived of as comprising nine (*nava*) islands (*dvīpa*), within one of which Māyāpur is situated, and within another the present town of Navadvīpa.

Navadvīpa-dhāma-pracāriṇī Sabhā—an organization founded in 1893 by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and his associates. Its objectives are described in vol. 1, p. 363.

Nimāi (Paṇḍita)—a pre-*sannyāsa* name of Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Nine main processes of bhakti—*śravaṇa* (hearing), *kīrtana* (chanting), *smaraṇa* (remembrance), *pāda-sevana* (serving the lotus feet), *arcana* (deity worship), *vandana* (praising, praying), *dāsya* (self-identification as a servant), *sakhya* (self-identification as a friend), *ātma-nivedana* (self-surrender). (From *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.5.23)

Nirjala-vrata—the vow to undertake total fasting, even from water.

Nirjana-bhajana—solitary *bhajana.*

Nirviśeṣa—"without attributes." (*Nir*—without; *viśeṣa*—attributes)

Nirviśeṣa-vāda—the doctrine of the unspecifiedness of the Absolute Truth. Often used as a synonym for Māyāvāda, which technically is but one genre of *nirviśeṣa-vāda.*

Niṣkiñcana—possessionless. A synonym of *akiñcana.*

Nitāi—diminutive of *Nityānanda. See also* **Nityānanda.**

Nitya—eternal.

(Lord) Nityānanda (Prabhu)—the avatar of Lord Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa's expansion as His own brother, who appeared as the foremost associate of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Nitya-siddha—an eternally perfect person, one who has never forgotten Kṛṣṇa.

Non-malefic mercy—*(Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's translation of* amandodayā dayā, *culled from* Śrī Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭaka *8.10 and quoted as Cc 2.10.119)* welfare acts without harmful effects. For Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's explanation of this term, see his commentary on Cc 2.10.119.

North India—especially refers to the belt where principally Hindi and related languages are spoken, but more broadly includes the entire country (except the northeast region) north of the modern states Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu.

Nṛsiṁha(-deva)—the half-man, half-lion avatar of Lord Viṣṇu.

Orissa—an ancient region and current state of eastern India. In 1912, much of that Oriya-speaking area was incorporated within the Province of Bihar and Orissa, in 1936 was separately formed as the Province of Orissa, and in 1950 was expanded to include several former princely states and reconstituted as the present state.

Oriya—(1) of or pertaining to Orissa; (2) the language or people of Orissa.

Padāvalī—"poetry," particularly Gauḍīya poetry describing the forms, qualities, and especially the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and Lord Caitanya.

Padāvalī-kīrtana—traditional Bengali verse-format *līlā-kīrtana.*

Pallī—neighborhood.

Pālya-dāsī—one of a class of *gopīs* whose members perform most intimate service to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

Pan—(1) betel leaf; (2) a mildly intoxicating masticatory of betel nut, lime, and often spices, all wrapped in a betel leaf.

Pañcarātra—a class of scriptures, venerated particularly by Vaiṣṇavas, describing deity worship, ritual, and procedures. *See also* **Nārada-pañcarātra.**

Pāñcarātrika, pāñcarātrikī—of, according to, or pursuant to *Pañcarātra.*

Pañca-tattva—"five principles"; Lord Kṛṣṇa as *bhakta-rūpa,* the form of a devotee, Lord Caitanya; *sva-rūpaka,* the expansion of a devotee, Lord Nityānanda; *bhakta-avatāra,* the descent of a devotee, Advaita Ācārya; *bhakta-śakti,* the energies of Kṛṣṇa, headed and represented by Gadādhara Paṇḍita; and *bhakta-ākhya,* those known as devotees, headed and represented by Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura. (See Cc 1.1.14)

Pāṇḍā—(1) a *brāhmaṇa* residing in a place of pilgrimage and performing diverse functions, such as temple priest or cook, bequeathed via hereditary right. Many *pāṇḍās* function as guides who direct pilgrims to the various sites in a holy place and help them perform rituals thereat.

Paṇḍita—(1) a scholar, particularly of Vedic knowledge; (2) an often undeserved epithet for a member of the *brāhmaṇa* caste, descendants of whom are expected to be learned in Vedic knowledge; (3) a title, affixed to the beginning or end of a name, that generally signifies the bearer to be an accomplished scholar, but may merely indicate his belonging to the *brāhmaṇa* caste.

Pāñjābī—*(Bengali)* a long loosely-fitting shirt.

Para-duḥkha-duḥkhī—a person unhappy at others' distress.

Parama-guru—the guru of one's guru.

Paramahaṁsa—a self-realized saint, completely beyond the influence of material nature. In Vaiṣṇava usage, this word applies only to a topmost Vaiṣṇava, for only a superlative devotee can be truly self-realized and beyond the influence of material nature.

Paramārtha—highest goal, whole truth, spiritual knowledge.

Paramārthī—(1) one dedicated to *paramārtha;* (2) the name of the Gauḍīya Mission's Oriya periodical.

Pāramārthika—of or relating to *paramārtha.*

Paramātmā—a name of Kṛṣṇa meaning "the Supreme Soul"; also known as *antaryāmī* (indweller). It usually indicates the localized Viṣṇu expansion of Kṛṣṇa pervading material nature and residing in the heart of each embodied living entity and every atom.

Paramparā—succession. *See also* Guru-*paramparā.*

Paraśurāma—the Viṣṇu-avatar who killed innumerable demonic *kṣatriyas* with his ax.

Para-upakāra—activities meant for the ultimate benefit of others.

Parikramā—circumambulation, particularly of temples and holy places.

Pariṣad—assembly, meeting, association, council.

Pastime(s)—*līlā* (q.v.).

Patañjali—the ancient author of the system of meditative yoga that aims at impersonal liberation.

Phala-śruti—"promise of success"; benedictions appended to the end of a scriptural passage or prayer that are bestowed upon whoever attentively and faithfully recites, hears, or reads the content.

Phalgu—small, feeble, weak, unsubstantial, insignificant, worthless, unprofitable, useless.

Prabhu—*(lowercase)* (1) master; *(capital)* (1) the Supreme Lord; (2) a respectful appellation for devotees.

Prabhupāda—(1) "whose position is representative of Prabhu (the Supreme Lord)"; (2) "at the lotus feet of Prabhu"; (3) "at whose lotus feet are many masters (i.e., Vaiṣṇavas)"; an honorific title used to designate or address an *ācārya. See also* **Śrīla Prabhupāda.**

Pracāra—preaching, propagation.

Pracāraka—preacher, propagator.

Pradarśanī—an exhibition.

Prākṛta—material, mundane.

Prākṛta-sahajiyā—an aberrant performer of devotional activities who neglects prescribed regulations and whose philosophical understanding is deviant.

Praṇāma-mantra—a formal prayer expressing respect.

Prapanna—one who has submitted himself or surrendered.

Prapannāśrama—(1) the generic name given by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura to Vaiṣṇava centers he established; (2) the name of some Gauḍīya Maṭha branches.

Prārthanā—a collection of devotional songs by Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura.

Prasāda—"mercy." Conventionally refers to food or other items received as mercy from the Supreme Lord after being offered in *arcana,* or similar items received from high-level devotees.

Prayāga—the Purāṇic and still commonly used name for Allahabad.

Prayojana—necessity, aim, objective; *(Gauḍīya usage)* the ultimate goal of life, namely to develop love of Godhead. *See also* **Abhidheya; Sambandha.**

Prema—transcendental love.

Prema-bhakti-candrikā—a collection of devotional songs by Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura.

Prema-vivarta—"transformations of love"; the name of a book ascribed to Śrī Jagadānanda Paṇḍita, an intimate associate of Lord Caitanya.

Premī—a devotee who has *prema. See also* **Rasika.**

Preta—a type of ghost that remains interminably hungry yet has no means for eating.

Pūjā—(1) (a) formal worship; (b) such worship conducted as part of the *arcana* system; (2) a festival connected with a particular *pūjā*—Durgā-*pūjā,* Govardhana-*pūjā,* etc. *See also* **Arcana.**

Pūjala rāga-patha—"They worshiped on the spontaneous path," from a poem by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī that captures the tenor of his mission. (See vol 1, p. 93)

Pūjārī—"one who performs *pūjā*"; a *brāhmaṇa* who worships the Lord's deity form. *See also* **Arcana.**

Puṇya—piety, pious deeds.

Puṇya-karma—scripturally ordained pious activities.

Purāṇa—a historical supplement to the Vedas. There are eighteen principal *Purāṇas.*

Pure devotee—*See* Śuddha-bhakta.

Pure devotional service—*See* śuddha-bhakti.

Purī—(1) the holy place in Orissa that is the principal abode of Lord Jagannātha; (2) a *sannyāsa* title.

Pūrṇimā—full-moon day.

Puruṣottama—a name of Kṛṣṇa meaning "the supreme male."

Puruṣottama-dhāma or **-kṣetra**—a name of Purī and the surrounding area.

Puruṣottama Maṭha—a Gauḍīya Maṭha branch established by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura at Purī.

Puruṣottama-vrata—special vows followed during the sacred intercalary month of Puruṣottama.

Puṣpa-samādhi—a memorial for a departed *paramahaṁsa* Vaiṣṇava established by entombing some flowers from his original *samādhi,* and considered a replica of and as venerable as the original. *See also* **Samādhi.**

(Śrī, Śrīmatī) Rādhā, Rādhārāṇī, Rādhikā—Lord Kṛṣṇa's internal potency and most intimate consort.

Rādhā-kuṇḍa—the bathing place of and nondifferent from Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, ascertained by Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas to be the most sacred location in all existence, the quintessence of all holy places.

Rādhāṣṭamī—the appearance day of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

Rāga—(1) *(Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava usage)* spontaneous intense loving attachment to Kṛṣṇa not governed by scriptural regulations, characteristic of the original inhabitants of Vṛndāvana; (2) a musical mode.

Rāga-mārga, Rāgānuga-bhakti, Rāga-patha—the path of following *rāgātmika-bhaktas* to cultivate love of Kṛṣṇa in intimate exchange.

Rāgātmika—composed of or characterized by *rāga*.

(Śrīla) Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī—(1506–1580) one of the Six Gosvāmīs, and famous for reciting *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

(Śrīla) Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī—(1495–1571) one of the Six Gosvāmīs, and known as the *prayojana-ācārya.*

Rākṣasa—(1) a powerful race of cannibals, usually possessed of mystic powers; (2) anyone of highly sinful mentality.

Rāma—"pleasant", "charming"; a prominent name of Viṣṇu. It particularly refers to the Viṣṇu-avatar Rāmacandra, who appeared in Tretā-yuga as the ideal king.

Rāmacandra—*See* Rāma.

(Śrīla) Rāmānanda Rāya—one of the most intimate associates of Lord Caitanya during His pastimes in Purī.

(Śrī, Śrīpāda) Rāmānuja, Rāmānujācārya—the powerful eleventh-century *ācārya* of the Śrī *sampradāya* who preached the philosophy of *viśiṣṭādvaita* (qualified oneness).

Rāmāyaṇa—the epic narration of Lord Rāmacandra's pastimes.

Rasa—taste, or mellow, of a relationship, particularly in regard to Kṛṣṇa. As explained by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu,* the five main *rasas* are *śānta* (neutrality), *dāsya* (servitude), *sakhya* (friendship), *vātsalya* (parental love), and *mādhurya* (amatory love).

Rasābhāsa—contradictory and distasteful overlapping of one *rasa* with another.

Rasagullā—a particular type of sweetball made from milk curd.

Rāsa(-līlā)—the circular dance of Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs,* the most celebrated of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes (described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* Tenth Canto, chapters twenty-nine through thirty-three).

Rasa-śāstra—a treatise concerning *rasa.*

Rāsa-sthalī—a site of *rāsa-līlā.* There are several within Vraja-*maṇḍala,* of which the most prominent (being the venue of the *mahā-rāsa* performed during Kārtika) is the site of the Rādhā-Govinda temple within the present town of Vrindaban.

Rasika—a person absorbed in the mellows of *rasa,* especially *gopī-rasa.* Refers to both devotees and the Supreme Lord.

Ratha-yātrā—the annual festival in Purī and other places for pulling the deities of Lord Jagannātha, Lord Balarāma, and Subhadrā-devī in procession on huge decorated canopied chariots.

Rāvaṇa—the *rākṣasa* king who was the chief foe of Lord Rāmacandra and ultimately was killed by Him.

Ṛṣi—(1) a sage; (2) *(original meaning)* a sage with transcendental ability to perceive and transmit nonextant Vedic mantras.

(Śrīla) Rūpa Gosvāmī—(1489–1564) the foremost of the Six Gosvāmīs, and known as the *rasācārya.*

Rūpānuga—a discipular follower of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

Rūpa-Raghunātha—Rūpa Gosvāmī and Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī. As the two among the Six Gosvāmīs whose writings particularly reveal the topmost *rasa* that is the essence of and worshipable goal in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma, their names are often clubbed together to indicate that essence and goal.

Sabhā—assembly, council.

Saccidānanda—*(lowercase)* "possessed of eternity (*sat*), knowledge (*cit*), and bliss (*ānanda*)"; attributes of the Supreme Lord and liberated devotees; *(capital)* (1) a name of Lord Viṣṇu, (2) a name of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

Śacīdevī, Śacīmātā—the mother of Lord Caitanya.

Śacīnandana—a name of Lord Caitanya meaning "the son of Śacī."

Sadācāra—adherence to scriptural rules governing proper behavior. *See also* **Ācāra.**

Sādhaka—a practitioner of *sādhana.*

Sādhana—(1) means for attaining a spiritual or religious goal; (2) regulated spiritual practice.

Sādhana-bhakti—(1) devotional service executed by practicing a regulative process meant to invoke one's dormant Kṛṣṇa consciousness; (2) *vaidhī bhakti* (q.v.).

Sadhu—(Sanskrit: *sādhu)* (1) a saintly person, especially a renunciant; (2) a devotee of Kṛṣṇa, especially a renunciant or pure devotee; (3) a Hindu holy man.

Sādhu-śāstra-guru—(from *Prema-bhakti-candrikā*) the threefold authoritative source of knowledge. The word *sādhu* used herein refers principally to recognized previous *ācāryas* and to present advanced devotees.

Sādhya—the goal, or desired attainment, of a particular *sādhana.*

Sāgara—ocean.

Sahajiyā—*See* Prākṛta-sahajiyā.

Sāhitya—literature.

Śaiva—"in relation to Lord Śiva"; *(particularly)* a worshiper of Lord Śiva.

Sajjana-toṣaṇī—the Vaiṣṇava magazine started by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and continued by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. (*Sajjana*—God's devotee; *toṣaṇī*—who gives satisfaction to)

Sakhī—"female friend"; *(Gauḍīya usage)* an intimate handmaid of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

Sakhya—friendship. *See also* **Rasa.**

Śākta—one who worships material energy, in her forms such as Kālī or Durgā, as the supreme reality.

Śakti—(1) energy, potency; (2) the personality of an energy or potency, e.g., Rādhā, Durgā.

Śaktyāveśa-avatāra—a person endowed by the Supreme Lord with special potency to carry out a particular mission.

Śālagrāma-śilā—Lord Viṣṇu in the form of particular stones.

Samādhi—(1) the perfected state of spiritual trance; (2) tomb of a departed saint, especially a *paramahaṁsa* Vaiṣṇava.

Samāj—(Sanskrit: *samāja)* society, association.

Samājī—a member of a *samāj.*

Sambandha—relationship. In Gauḍīya theology, *sambandha-jñāna* (knowledge of one's existential position in relationship to the Supreme and everything else that be) is considered the first of three divisions of Vedic knowledge. The other two are *abhidheya* (q.v.) and *prayojana* (q.v.).

Sambandha-jñāna—knowledge of the mutual relationship between the Supreme Lord and His energies.

Sammilanī—convention, meeting.

Sampradāya—a sect of spiritual practitioners maintained by the principle of preceptorial succession and distinguished by a unique philosophical position.

Saṁsāra—(1) material existence; (2) the cycle of birth and death; (3) family life.

Saṁskāra—a purificatory rite.

Saṁskāra-dīpikā—the booklet of ceremonies and rituals for Gauḍīya renunciants compiled by Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī as a supplement to his *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā.*

(Śrīla) Sanātana Gosvāmī—(1488–1558) one of the Six Gosvāmīs. He was entrusted by Lord

Caitanya to delineate the principles of *vaidhī bhakti,* the relationship between *vaidhī bhakti* and *rāgānuga-bhakti,* and the subtle truths for ascertaining the differences between manifest and unmanifest Gokula.

Sanātana-śikṣā—Lord Caitanya's systematic instruction to Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī (detailed in Cc 2.20–24).

Saṅga—association (with persons, objects, or conceptions).

Saṅgha—a formal association, establishment, or institution.

Śaṅkara, Śaṅkarācārya—(686–718) an avatar of Lord Śiva who established Māyāvāda in the modern age. *See also* **Ādi-Śaṅkarācārya.**

Saṅkīrtana—congregational chanting of the Supreme Lord's holy names. *See also* **Kīrtana; Nagara-saṅkīrtana.**

Sannyāsa—celibate renounced life, the fourth *āśrama* of the Vedic social system. *See also* **Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Śānta-rasa—the mellow of neutral admiration. *See also* **Rasa.**

Sāragrāhī—"one who appreciates merit or worth"; one who enters into the spirit of something; one who accepts the essence of reality. (*Sāra*—essence; *grāhī*—one who accepts)

Śaraṇāgati—(1) "approach for protection," the path of surrender to the Lord; (2) a collection of songs by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura outlining that path.

Sārasvata—in relation to Sarasvatī.

Sarasvatī—(1) (a) the goddess of learning; (b) the same goddess in the form of a river (several rivers bear this name, including one that flows through Māyāpur, where she is popularly known as Jalāṅgī; (2) a title for a scholar, indicating that he has received the grace of Goddess Sarasvatī.

Sarovara—lake.

Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya—a contemporaneous associate of Lord Caitanya.

Śāstra—(1) revealed scripture; (2) the four Vedas and literature in pursuance of the Vedic version.

Śāstrī—(1) a scholar, particularly of Vedic knowledge; *paṇḍita* (q.v.) (2) a title, generally affixed to the end of a name, for an accomplished scholar; (3) a *brāhmaṇa* surname.

Śāstric *(anglicization)*—scriptural.

Śāstrīya—scriptural.

Sat—correct, proper, good, genuine, eternal, existing, wise, true.

Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā—the book of ceremonies and rituals for Gauḍīya householders compiled by Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī.

Ṣaṭ-sandarbha—"six treatises"; a series of works by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī that systematically present and establish Gauḍīya philosophy.

Sattva—(1) goodness, purity; (2) existence, essence, existential condition; (3) *(Vaiṣṇava usage)* the pristine condition of the pure soul, overflowing with loving feelings for Kṛṣṇa.

Sāttvika—(1) characterized by the mode of goodness *(sattva)*; (2) related to existence. *See also* **Modes of material nature.**

Sātvata—a synonym of *Vaiṣṇava* (q.v.).

Satya—truth.

Satya-yuga—the first in the universal cycle of four ages, characterized by proper and complete maintenance of the principles of dharma.

Sevā—service. In Vaiṣṇava usage it refers particularly to service offered voluntarily and selflessly to Bhagavān and His devotees. *See also* **Devotional service.**

Sevonmukha—"inclined to service." It usually indicates the inclination of a devotee to serve the Supreme Lord and His pure representatives. *See also* **Devotional service.**

Siddha—(1) perfect; (2) a consummate saint. It is often used as a title for a perfected saint or one thus considered. *See also* **Nitya-siddha.**

Siddhānta—(1) the ultimate conclusion of any philosophical proposal or system; (2) an established textbook of Vedic astronomy; (3) the branch of astronomy giving mathematical basis to stellar observations.

Siddha-praṇālī—(1) a process whereby one envisions himself in his (real or supposed) eternal spiritual identity; (2) *sādhana* (a process leading to perfection); (3) the path practiced and shown by perfect devotees; (4) the preceptorial line of perfect devotees.* (*Praṇālī*—method, procedure, channel)

Siddha-svarūpa—the eternal form of a perfect devotee in Kṛṣṇa-*līlā*.

Siddhi—(1) perfection; (2) the perfectional stage; (3) mystical achievement.

Śikhā—symbolic tuft of hair on the pate, traditionally obligatory for most male members of Vedic society.

Śikṣā—(1) training, education, instruction; (2) the section of Sanskrit studies dealing with pronunciation.

Śikṣā-guru—an instructing guru.

Śikṣāṣṭaka—the eight verses composed by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu expressing the quintessence of Vaiṣṇava philosophy.

Śilā—stone. *See also* **Govardhana-śilā; Śālagrāma-śilā.**

Śiṣya—(feminine: *śiṣyā*) a disciple.

Sītā—the eternal consort of Lord Rāmacandra.

Śiva—the demigod in charge of the mode of ignorance and destruction of the material manifestation, and also famous as the protector of Vṛndāvana-*dhāma* and as the best of Vaiṣṇavas (*vaiṣṇavānāṁ yathā śambhuḥ—Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 12.13.16).

Six Gosvāmīs (of Vṛndāvana)—Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, and Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, the principal renunciant followers of Lord Caitanya who on His order resided in Vṛndāvana and wrote many important books. After Caitanya Mahāprabhu departed this world, they became the leaders of the Gauḍīya community. *See also the individual names.*

Śloka—a Sanskrit verse, particularly one in the meter *anuṣṭubh,* and usually from a recognized scripture or text.

Smaraṇa—remembrance, contemplation.

Smārta—"follower of *smṛti.*" It generally refers to an adherent of *smārta-vāda,* the belief that by fastidiously following *smṛti* regulations one can enjoy the results of pious activities, gradually qualify to be reborn within the *brāhmaṇa* caste and be elevated to the platform of *jñāna,* and finally achieve *mukti.* This materialistic understanding of Vedic dharma is opposed to Vaiṣṇava dharma.

Smārta-brāhmaṇas—*brāhmaṇa* adherents of *smārta-vāda.*

Smṛti—(a) Vedic texts subsequent to *śruti* and, unlike *śruti,* handed down in writing; (b) one of several compilations of civil and criminal laws and codes of behavior for followers of Vedic culture. *See also* **Śāstra; Śruti.**

South India—a cultural bloc distinct from North India, it basically comprises the modern states Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu.

Spiritual master—guru.

Śraddhā—faith.

Śrāddha—a ceremony for the benefit of departed forefathers.

Śrauta—that which is heard in discipular succession and is according to the Vedas.

Śrī—"opulence" or "possessed of opulence"; (1) an epithet for Rādhārāṇī and Lakṣmī; (2) a term, usually prepositive, to denote respect for a person or a sacred book, place, or other object.

Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha—(1) an embellished mode of reference to the Gauḍīya Maṭha institution; (2) the original Gauḍīya Maṭha, in Calcutta.

Śrīla—an honorific prefix to names of exalted devotees.

Śrīla Prabhupāda—*(in this book, refers to)* (1) Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda; (2) His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam—the topmost *Purāṇa,* composed by Śrīla Vyāsadeva to present confidential and definitive understanding of Lord Kṛṣṇa, His devotees, and pure devotional service to Him. Also known as the *Bhāgavata* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa.*

Śrīmatī—(1) feminine form of the honorific address Śrī; (2) an epithet of Rādhārāṇī.

Śrīpāṭa—place of the appearance or *bhajana* of a great Vaiṣṇava.

Śrī sampradāya—succession originating from Lakṣmī, of which the prominent *ācārya* in the current age is Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya.

Śrī Vaiṣṇava—devotee in the Śrī *sampradāya.*

Śrīvāsa (Paṇḍita, Ṭhākura)—a contemporaneous associate of Lord Caitanya.

Śrīvāsa Aṅgana—(1) the site in Māyāpur of Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura's home; (2) the temple established thereat by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Śṛṅgāra—amatory love.

Śruti—"what has been heard"; (1) sound; (2) the Veda, sacred knowledge in the form of eternal sounds or words, heard or communicated from the beginning of creation and transmitted orally by *brāhmaṇas* from generation to generation; considered the original and thus most

authoritative section of *śāstra,* having precedence over *smṛti. See also* **Śāstra; Smṛti.**

Sthalī—place.

Sthāna—place, abode, position.

Sudarśana—the disk weapon of Lord Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa.

Śuddha—pure.

Śuddha-bhakta—devotee free from desires other than to please Kṛṣṇa through pure devotional service.

śuddha-bhakti—devotional service performed solely for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa, uncontaminated by any other motive. (See explanation in vol. 1, p. 283)

Śuddha-nāma—pure chanting of the holy names, i.e., free from offenses, personal motives, and misconceptions. *See also* **Nāmābhāsa; Nāmāparādha.**

Śūdra—(1) laborer or artisan; (2) the fourth occupational division of the Vedic social system. *See also* **Varṇa; Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Śukadeva Gosvāmī—the son of Śrīla Vyāsadeva and the original speaker of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in its present form.

Sukha—happiness.

Supersoul—*See* Paramātmā.

Supreme Personality of Go dhead—Kṛṣṇa (God), the supreme creator, maintainer, and controller of all that be.

Surrender—*(in Vaiṣṇava parlance)* full submission (of oneself as a servant of guru and Bhagavān).

Sūtra—(1) a thread (including the sacred thread worn by higher-caste men); (2) an aphorism, especially one considered to be definitive or an irreducible rule; (3) a work consisting of such aphorisms.

Svāmī—*See* Gosvāmī.

Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja—"the grove that gives the happiness of one's own bliss;" Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's place of *bhajana* and residence in Godrumadvīpa, Navadvīpa-*dhāma.*

Svarga—heaven. Described in Vedic literature, it is inhabited by persons who by *puṇya-*

karma attain the status of demigods, enabling them to enjoy paradisiac delights for several thousand years by earthly calculation. *Svarga* differs from Abrahamic ideations of heaven inasmuch as it is not the abode of the Supreme Lord, nor is residence there eternal.

Svarūpa—"own form"; (1) the eternal form of the Supreme Lord; (2) the eternal form intrinsic to a specific *jīva;* (3) intrinsic spiritual nature.

(Śrīla) Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī—the personal secretary and intimate confidant of Lord Caitanya during His pastimes in Purī.

Svarūpa-śakti—internal or intrinsic potency.

Svarupganj—the terrestrial name for a village in the area corresponding to that which by spiritual vision is perceived as Godrumadvīpa, within Navadvīpa-*dhāma;* therein Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja is situated.

Śyāmānandī—(1) a discipular follower of Śyāmānanda Prabhu, a great sixteenth-century Gauḍīya preacher; (2) the sect within the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* comprising such followers. (See vol. 1, p. 44, fn*)

Tāmasic—characterized by the mode of ignorance (*tamas*). *See also* **Modes of material nature.**

Tantra—a genre of texts that describe esoteric practices of some Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain sects, and include theology, rituals, yoga, and construction of temples and images, and encompass the Vaiṣṇava *saṁhitās,* Śaiva *āgama*s, and Śākta tantras (which deal with spells, rituals, and mystic symbols). Among these, only the Vaiṣṇava- or Sātvata-tantras are Vedic.

Tantric—(1) of or relating to tantra; (2) a practitioner of tantrism.

Tantrism—practices based on tantra. It is generally identified with rituals of the "left-hand" Śākta system, including ritual copulation and black magic, but also correctly refers to the more staid practices of various mainstream Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain sects.

Tattva—(1) metaphysical principle; (2) philosophical topic, particularly as described in Vedic scripture and elucidated by *ācāryas.*

Ṭhākura—a title designating a Vaiṣṇava situated on the topmost level of devotional service. *See also* **Paramahaṁsa.**

Ṭīkā—commentary on scripture, especially a commentary on or based on a *bhāṣya* (q.v.).

Tilaka—auspicious clay-markings on the upper part of the body, principally the forehead. The design varies according to, and thus indicates, one's *sampradāya.*

Timiṅgila—(described in Vedic literature) an aquatic that preys on whales.

Tirobhāva—Vaiṣṇava terminology for the apparent demise of a Viṣṇu-avatar or an exalted devotee, in contradistinction to the death of conditioned souls as per the law of karma. Rendered in English as *disappearance,* for rather than ceasing to exist, such eternal personages simply become indiscernable to mortal vision, like the disappearance of the sun upon setting.

Tirobhāva-tithi—the anniversary day of the disappearance of an exalted devotee or Viṣṇu-avatar. *See also* **Āvirbhāva-tithi; Tithi.**

Tīrtha—(1) a holy place, person, or object; (2) a *sannyāsa* title (one of ten awarded to sannyasis of the Śaṅkara *sampradāya,* one of a hundred and eight awarded to Gauḍīya sannyasis, and the only title awarded to Mādhva sannyasis).

Tithi—lunar day. In Vedic culture, important events such as the appearance or disappearance of exalted personages are recorded and celebrated according to the corresponding *tithi.*

Ṭoṭā-gopīnātha—(1) the particular deity of Gopīnātha situated in Purī and previously served by Gadādhara Paṇḍita; (2) the temple of this deity. (*Ṭoṭā* [Oriya]—grove.)

Tretā-yuga—the second in the universal cycle of four ages, characterized by a one-fourth decrease in *dharmika* principles from the preceding age, Satya-yuga (q.v.).

Tridaṇḍa—the symbolic staff composed of three (*tri*) bamboo rods carried by Vaiṣṇava sannyasis of the Gauḍīya and Śrī *sampradāyas.* The Gauḍīya *tridaṇḍa* actually has four sticks. (See Cc 2.3.6, commentary) *See also* **Daṇḍa.**

Tridaṇḍī—a Vaiṣṇava sannyasi who carries a *tridaṇḍa.*

Tṛṇād api sunīcatā—"the state of being lower than grass"; considering oneself very low; utter humility. This phrase is derived from *tṛṇād api sunīcena* (q.v.).

Tṛṇād api sunīcena—"by one who considers himself lower than grass"; the first words of an oft-quoted verse by Lord Caitanya recommending utter humility. The full verse with translation appears in vol. 2, p. 220.

Tulasī—(1) the sacred plant most dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa, and thus worshiped by the Lord's devotees; (2) (in her original form) a *gopī* of Vṛndāvana. Both neckbeads (*kaṇṭhi-mālā*) and chanting beads (*japa-mālā*) made from *tulasī* wood are necessary paraphernalia for Gauḍīyas. For offering *bhoga* to Lord Viṣṇu, *tulasī* leaves are essential, as He does not accept any offering sans *tulasī* leaves.

Uddīpana—item that stimulates remembrance of and love for Kṛṣṇa—e.g., Śrī Kṛṣṇa's qualities and activities, His mode of decoration, the way His hair is arranged, His smile, bodily

fragrance, flute, bugle, ankle-bells, conch, foot-impressions, and places of pastimes, Tulasī, the Vaiṣṇavas, Ekādaśī, etc. (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 2.1.301–2).

United Provinces—(full name: United Provinces of Agra and Oudh) a major administrative area of northern British India. It corresponded approximately to the present-day states of Uttar Pradesh (also abbreviated as U.P.) and Uttarkhand.

Untouchable—(Sanskrit: *aspṛśya*) (1) an object or person considered defiling if contacted by touch; (2) outcaste, the broad class (beneath all Hindu castes) whose members are shunned because of their low birth and the unclean habits and professions allotted them.

U.P.—*See* **United Provinces**

Upanayana—the ceremony whereby one is initiated into the chanting of Brahma-*gāyatrī* and invested with an *upavīta,* thus being endowed by the guru with "second" birth. Traditionally this induction certified the disciple for training in systematic memorization of one or more Vedas. *See also* **Dīkṣā.**

Upaniṣads—philosophical treatises within the Vedas, one hundred and eight of which are considered principal, and the following ten the most important: *Īśa (Iśopaṇiṣad), Kena, Kaṭha, Praśna, Muṇḍaka, Māṇḍūkya, Taittirīya, Aitareya, Chāndogya, Bṛhad-āraṇyaka.* Some add *Śvetāśvatara* and thus designate eleven principal *Upaniṣads*.

Upavīta—"sacred thread"; a loop of cotton strands bestowed upon a male youth in a religious ceremony for (at least ostensibly) inducting him into Vedic study; it was henceforth to be worn at all times, generally over the left shoulder and under the right, and extending diagonally across the torso. Although traditionally also given to *kṣatriyas* and *vaiśyas,* in recent generations it has been the prerogative of *brāhmaṇas,* and thus a status symbol.

Ürja-vrata—*See* Kārtika-vrata.

Uttama—"above ignorance and darkness"; topmost.

Uttama-adhikārī—topmost, fully perfect devotee. *See also* **Paramahaṁsa.**

Vāda—a philosophical theory. In Vedic philosophy it denotes various theories, such as Māyāvāda, *viśiṣṭādvaita-vāda,* etc.

Vādī—*(in conjunction with a qualifying term)* an adherent of a specific *vāda;* e.g., Māyāvādī means an adherent of Māyāvāda.

Vaibhava—might, power, greatness, grandeur, glory, magnificence.

Vaidhī bhakti—the stage of *sādhana* consisting of prescribed regulations meant to gradually

elevate neophyte devotees. *See also* **Sādhana-bhakti.**

Vaikuṇṭha—the spiritual world.

Vairāgī—(1) a mendicant; (2) an epithet for members of the *bābājī* class, many of whom at the time of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī were superficially renounced hypocrites who indulged in illicit sex. *See also* **Bābājī.**

Vairāgya—renunciation, detachment. *See also* **Yukta-vairāgya.**

Vaiṣṇava—(1) a devotee of Viṣṇu (Kṛṣṇa), especially a pure, fully perfect devotee; (2) of or pertaining to a Vaiṣṇava or to Vaiṣṇava dharma.

Vaiṣṇava-aparādha—offense against a Vaiṣṇava. *See also* **Aparādha.**

Vaiṣṇava dharma, Vaiṣṇavism—the cult of worship of Viṣṇu.

Vaiṣṇavī—a female Vaiṣṇava.

Vaiśya—(1) an agriculturist or merchant; (2) the third occupational division of the Vedic social system. *See also* **Varṇa; Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Vallabha—"lover," "husband"; (1) a name of Kṛṣṇa; (2) (also known as Vallabhācārya) a contemporary of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the preceptor of a Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* prominent in western India; (3) the name of the aforesaid *sampradāya.*

Vaṁśa—dynasty.

Vana(m)—forest.

Vānaprastha—(1) a celibate retiree from family life; (2) the third *āśrama* of the Vedic social system. *See also* **Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Vāṇī—words, instructions, message.

Vapu—body, form.

Varṇa—any of the four occupational divisions in the Vedic social system: *brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya,* and *śūdra. See also* **Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Varṇāśrama-dharma—the Vedic social system of four occupational divisions and four spiritual orders. *See also* **Āśrama; Dharma; Varṇa.**

Vārṣabhānavī—a name for Rādhārāṇī meaning "the daughter of Mahārāja Vṛṣabhānu."

Vāsa—residence; the state of residing in.

Vāsī—resident.

Vātsalya-rasa—"mellow of parental affection." *See also* **Rasa.**

Vedānta—"conclusion of Vedic knowledge"; (1) the *Upaniṣads;* (2) the *Vedānta-sūtra* or philosophy thereof.

Vedānta-sūtra—Śrīla Vyāsadeva's aphoristic compendium of the essence of Vedic knowledge.

Vicāra—analysis, consideration, judgment.

Viddha—*(Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's usage)* contaminated.

Vidhi—scripturally ordained regulations.

Vidhi-mārga—the path of *bhakti* governed by adherence to scripturally ordained regulations (and thus distinguished from *rāga-mārga*).

Vidvad-rūḍhi—the meaning (*rūḍhi*) of a word accepted by the learned (*vidvān*); the internal, transcendental meaning of a word. *See also* **Ajña-rūḍhi.**

Vidyā—knowledge.

Vigraha—"form." It often indicates the Supreme Lord in His manifestation as the deity (q.v.).

Vijaya-vigraha—a small deity of a temple who participates in festivals on behalf of the larger deity, who generally remains on the altar. In South India and in ISKCON, this deity is more commonly known by the synonymous term *utsava-vigraha.*

Vilāpa-kusumāñjali—The composition of 104 verses by Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī expressing his desperate separation from Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and craving Her service.

Vilāsa—pastime, sport, appearance, manifestation, charm, shining, beauty.

Vinoda—pleasure.

Vipralambha, **Viraha**—separation (of lovers). Lord Caitanya taught that the most exquisite worship of Kṛṣṇa is in the mood of separation (*viraha-bhāva*); hence this mood is the heart of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma. Devotees in this mortal world also feel *viraha* from devotees departed from it.

Viṣaya—object, concern, sphere, category, etc.

Viṣaya-vigraha—"the form of the object," the object of *prema*, i.e., Kṛṣṇa. *See also* **Āśraya-vigraha.**

Viṣṇu—the Supreme Lord, especially His majestic four-armed forms in Vaikuṇṭha and His expansions for creating and maintaining the material universes.

Viṣṇupriyā—the eternal consort of Lord Caitanya who appeared in His pastimes as His second wife, famous for her strict practice of Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti* after He accepted *sannyāsa*.

Viṣṇusvāmī—the original preceptor of the Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* named after him.

Viśva—universe, universal, earth, world, all, entire, whole.

(Śrīla) Viśvanātha Cakravartī—(seventeenth century) a prominent Gauḍīya *ācārya* best known for writings of his that illuminate *mādhurya-bhāva*.

Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā—"universal royal court of Vaiṣṇavas"; the organization founded by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and his associates in 1919 that served as the official organ of the Gauḍīya Maṭha institution.

Vraja—a synonym of Vṛndāvana.

Vrajapattana—"the town of Vraja"; an area in Māyāpur so named by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura for its being considered nondifferent from Vṛndāvana, and where he resided for several years prior to accepting *sannyāsa*. That area was later incorporated within the compound of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha.

Vraja-vāsa—residence in Vraja.

Vraja-vāsī—(1) a resident of Vraja; (2) a designation given by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to *vānaprastha* disciples.

Vrajendra-nandana—a name of Kṛṣṇa meaning "son of Nanda Mahārāja, the king of Vraja."

Vrata—vow or observance, usually religious.

Vṛndāvana—(1) the uppermost transcendental abode of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa; (2) the same abode descended to this planet and comprising the present town and surrounding area of Vrindaban (about ninety miles southeast of Delhi), wherein Kṛṣṇa enacted childhood and adolescent pastimes five thousand years ago.

(Śrīla) Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura—the author of *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*.

(Śrīla) Vyāsadeva—the avatar of Lord Kṛṣṇa who compiled the *Vedas, Purāṇas, Vedānta-sūtra,* and *Mahābhārata*.

Vyāsa-pūjā—the ceremony conducted on the *āvirbhāva-tithi* of a guru to honor him as a representative of Vyāsadeva. *See also* **Āvirbhāva-tithi.**

Yajña—a formal Vedic sacrifice.

Yama, Yamarāja—the lord of death.

Yantra—machine.

Yātrā—(1) a religious festival; (2) a religious theatrical performance intended for common people; (3) journey.

Yavana—a barbarian. A *yavana* is similar to a *mleccha* yet considered even more degraded. Among Bengali Hindus, *yavana* is a synonym for Muslim.

Yoga-māyā—(1) *(lowercase)* the spiritual "illusion" whereby out of intense love an infinitesimal *jīva* can assume the role of a child, friend, parent, or lover of the Supreme Lord; (2) *(uppercase)* the personification of this potency.

Yogapīṭha—the birthsite of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in Māyāpur.

Yuga—one of a cycle of four ages in the history of the universe. *See also* **Kali-yuga.**

Yuga-dharma—the process of dharma established by the Supreme Lord in each *yuga,* being the most suitable and effective according to peoples' general capabilities and disposition during that period.

Yukta-vairāgya—renunciation by engaging worldly objects in service to the Supreme Lord without having personal attachment for them. *See also* **Vairāgya.**

Guide to Obscure English Words

Some of the entries herein are listed not in their root form but as they appear within this volume. Simple definitions are given according to the specific context in which they have been used. For more precise and elaborate explanations, readers may consult a comprehensive dictionary.

Abet—to support

Abjure—to give up

Abstrusity—a subject that is difficult to understand

Abysmal—extremely bad

Accede—to consent or agree to

Accost—to aggressively challenge another person

Acolyte—a devout follower

Actuate—to motivate

Adage—a traditional saying that expresses a generally accepted truth

Adjudge—to regard, consider, or deem

Admixture—a mixture (especially wherein one component is dissimilar to the others)

Adventitious—added yet unnecessary

Affective—pertaining to the emotions

Afflatus—powerful spiritually creative impulse

Albeit—although, even though

Amatory—pertaining to sexual love

Amorphous—without distinct shape

Amour—(especially an illicit) love affair

Anchorite—a religious hermit

Ancillary—additional and supplementary

Anodyne—pain-killing

Antinomianism—the belief that salvation is attained merely through faith and grace and that morality is unnecessary

Antipathetic—adverse

Antiquated—outdated, outmoded, obsolete

Apocrypha—books presented as authoritative yet of doubtful origin

Apoplectic—of or concerning extreme anger

Apostasy—giving up religious vows

Apotheosis—deification of mortals (see vol. 3, p. 122)

Appertaining—relating

Approbate—to praise

Apropos—relevant

Arbiter—one whose decision is accepted as authoritative in a disputed matter

Arid—dry

Arraignment—an accusation

Arrantly—completely

Asseverate—to insist

Assiduously—carefully and diligently

Assonance—similarity

Atavistic—tending to revert to a former state

Augment—to increase

Autochthonous—indigenous and maintained despite outside influences

Balderdash—nonsense

Bastion—a strongly defended position

Bellicosely—aggressively

Belligerent—aggressive, inclined to or actually engaged in fighting

Benchmark—a standard by which something is measured

Bibulous—habituated to drinking alcohol

Blight—a condition that causes widespread destruction and the extinction of hope

Blinkered—*(adj.)* with or as if wearing blinkers (partial covers for the eyes)

Brummagem—false

Brute—*(adj)* animal-like

Bumptiously—assertively

Cadre—the core group of a revolutionary movement

Calumny—**a** slanderous accusation

Canard—an absurdly false report

Canker—*(noun)* rot

Cant—hypocritically pious talk

Captious—fault-finding

Castigate—to criticize severely

Catachresis—the deliberate paradoxical use of words

Cataclysmic—of the nature of a sharp change that alters accepted norms

Cavalier—carefree due to self-confidence

Cede—to give under pressure

Celerity—speed

Cerebration—mental or intellectual activity

Chagrin—annoyance

Charade—a deceptive but easily detected pretence

Charlatan—a fraud; one who makes an elaborate show of being accomplished in a particular line

Chasmal—deep

Chattels—items of personal property

Chicanery—cheating

Chimeric—imaginary and highly unlikely

Clerisy—intelligentsia, the educated class

Cogency—being intellectually convincing

Commensurate—corresponding or in line with

Complaisant—happily servile and cooperative

Concupiscent—sexual

Confabulated—imagined yet believed to be true

Confute—to prove an argument or proposition to be wrong

Connivance—unholy cooperation

Consonance—accord, agreement

Consuetudes—customs, usages

Contagion—a harmful influence with the tendency to quickly spread

Contradistinction—distinction by contrast or opposition

Contrariety—being contrary

Contumely—an arrogant or insulting remark

Conundrum—a statement that appears to defy common sense and therefore is difficult to understand

Convivial—sociable

Corporal—bodily, physical

Coterie—a small select group

Counterpart—a duplicate or close likeness; a person or thing that closely resembles another or can substitute for the other; one of two parts that together form a whole or perfectly complement each other

Covenant—*(noun)* vow

Crass—gross, born of ignorance

Crore—ten million

Culpable—blameworthy

Dacoity—armed robbery performed by a group

Debarred—*(adj.)* forbidden

Decrepit—worn down by age

Delectation—enjoyment, delight

Deleterious—morally harmful

Denigrate—to verbally attack and belittle

Deplumed—stripped of honor

Derogation—a diminishing in stature or value

Derring-do—unabashed courage

Desacralize—to divest of sanctity or religious meaning

Detente—an agreement between rivals meant for reducing mutual hostility

Detractor—one who attempts to spoil another's good reputation through criticism

Devolve—to be transferred from one person to another

Diaspora—a dispersed people who formerly lived as one

Didactic—instructive

Dint—means, effect

Disabuse—to free from misconception

Dissembling—pretending

Dissimulation—a disguise

Dissolute—depraved, engaged in immorality

Divaricating—differing in opinion

Doggerel—a crude verse

Dollop—to present crudely and in large quantity

Draconian—very severe

Drivel—foolish talk

Ebulliently—with life and enthusiasm

Ecclesia—a religious congregation

Ecclesiastic—pertaining to church affairs

Eerily—in a strange way and evoking inexplicable uneasiness

Effete—weak, lacking vitality

Efflorescence—a flowering, development like that of a flower

Effusion—an outpouring

Egregious—outrageous

Elixir—mystical cure-all, essence

Emprise—a noble endeavor

Endemic—widespread

Endogamous—according to an accepted system of marrying only within a given group

Envisage—to view mentally (especially a future possibility)

Epicurean—a sensuous person (especially one dedicated to the pleasures of the tongue)

Epigone—a less worthy descendant of illustrious ancestors

Eremitic—of or concerning a religious hermit

Ergo—therefore

Ersatz—inferiorly imitative

Eschew—to avoid

Esoterica—internal matters suitable only for an inner group

Esurient—greedy

Euphony—a pleasant-sounding combination of words (due to their phonetic quality)

Eviscerate—to deprive of essence

Execrably—detestably

Exegetical—pertaining to analysis of scripture

Expatiate—to speak at length and in detail

Extenuate—to treat as if unimportant

Extolment—high praise

Extrapolate—to infer or derive from incomplete information

Fabulation—an invented story

Factoidal—of the nature of untrue information that is widely disseminated in print and thus comes to be popularly accepted

Factotum—versatile helper

Fealty—committed faithfulness

Firmament—the sky

Flunkey—a follower, servant, or sycophant

Forfend—to make secure

Forswear—to fully give up

Forsworn—to have fully given up

Fraught with—full of

Fray—an emotional dispute

Fructuous—productive

Fulsome—insincerely agreeable

Gaff—a mistake

Garner—to acquire or gather

Gaudily—in a distastefully showy manner

Gloss—a commentary

Gramophone—old-fashioned machine for audio playback

Guileless—without deception

Gushily—with marked expression of emotion

Hamstring—to hinder severely

Harlot—a prostitute

Hegemony—unchallengeable dominance

Histrionics—excessive emotionalism

Hoary—old and therefore venerable

Hobnob—to mix freely and intimately with others

Homily—a religious sermon

Hubris—arrogance

Huckstery—petty trading (often by dubious means)

Hypothetical—proposed yet unproved

Ignoramus—an ignorant person

Ilk—type

Impeccable—faultless

Implacable—impossible to pacify

Impugne—to attack; to accuse of being false or questionable

Impute—to attribute

Inane—idiotic

Incontrovertible—indisputable

Inculcate—to teach by repetition

Indomitable—unconquerable

Inept—incapable, unsuitable

Ineradicable—irremovable

Infraction—a violation

Ingrate—an ungrateful person

Inordinately—too much

Insolent—rude to a superior

Insouciance—a lack of concern

Interlocution—conversation

Intransigent—stubborn, unreasonably refusing to change

Inviolable—incapable of being opposed

Jejune—boring, insubstantial

Lacerate—to tear apart

Lakh—one hundred thousand

Languid—lacking vitality

Lassitude—inertia born of weariness

Laudation—an act of praise

Lecherous—inordinately indulgent in sex

Lechery—inordinate indulgence in sex

Liaison—a close (especially an adulterous) relationship

Licentiousness—indulgence in lust

Linchpin—an essential binding element

Lineament—definitive characteristic

Literati—the educated class

Locution—a phrase; speaking style

Lucubration—great study

Luxuriate—to indulge oneself, to take luxurious pleasure in

Magisterial—authoritative, dominating

Manacled—*(adj.)* bound

Maraud—to attack with the intention to rob

Masquerade—to disguise oneself

Matutinally—occurring in the morning

Mawkish—cheaply sentimental

Mīlange—a disordered mixture

Meretricious—cheaply showy

Miasmic—poisonous

Miscegenation—sexual union between persons of different stock

Missive—a letter (of correspondence)

Modus operandi—*(Latin)* "method of operation"; a personal style of performing an activity

Modus vivendi—*(Latin)* "mode of living"; a temporary arrangement between rivals prior to or instead of a final settlement

Monolith—a large and apparently invincible structure

More—traditional usage

Moribund—about to die or cease to exist

Muse—to deeply consider

Myopically—as if of blurred vision or unable to see properly

Myrmidon—an unquestioningly faithful follower who is likely to attack opponents

Mystagogy—preliminary instruction meant to lead to mystical knowledge

Nary—not even one

Nemesis—the cause of ruination

Neoteric—modern, new

Nigh—almost; close (in time)

Ninny—a fool

Nonpareil—unequaled

Nostrum—a popular yet ineffective remedy

Nouveaux cognoscenti—a class of newly educated people who are eager to flaunt their knowledge

Nuptial—relating to marriage

Obfuscate—to make unclear

Obliquity—immoral (or otherwise wrong) practice

Obsequies—death ceremonies

Obsequious—of the nature of a yes-man

Obturate—to obstruct

Odium—detestation

Oligarchy—dominance by a few people

Omniform—taking various forms

Ontology—(*philosophy*) the study of the nature of existence in general, or of a particular subject; that which concerns the essence of a subject or entity

Opprobrium—a reproach for shameful behavior

Outlandish—very strange or improper

Oxymoron—a combination of words that creates an incongruous or contradictory concept

Pallid—lacking vigor

Paradigmatic—exemplary

Paramountcy—the state of being above others

Parlance—manner of speaking, idiom

Patent—obvious

Patrician—aristocratic

Peccant—morally wrong or guilty

Pecuniary—for acquiring money

Pedant—one who is proud of his bookish knowledge yet has little actual understanding

Pedestal—a high position

Pellucid—clear

Penchant—inclination, liking

Peon—a menial messenger

Perchance—by chance

Peripatetic—wandering (especially on foot)

Pernicious—destructive

Perspicaciously—with clear insight

Pettifogger—one who argues about minor points

Phlegmatic—impassive, indifferent, unemotional

Pilloried—publicly abused

Plebeian—low-class, working-class

Polity—a method of organization

Polymathy—knowledge in many fields

Poppycock—nonsense

Praxis (*pl.* praxes)—a mode of activity based on a branch of learning

Prehensility—keen intellectual ability

Preponderant—having great (or greater) influence, power, or number

Prestation—a traditional offering

Preternatural—supernatural

Prevenient—occurring before

Pristine—original and pure

Proffer—to offer or present for consideration

Profligate—wholly and shamelessly lusty

Proleptically—in anticipation

Promenaded—publicly showed off, paraded

Propinquity—closeness, proximity

Proscribed—*(adj.)* prohibited, forbidden as harmful or unlawful

Proscription—a prohibition

Proviso—a conditional stipulation

Prurience—excessive interest in sex

Psilanthropism—the doctrine that Jesus Christ was merely a human being

Punctilio—a minor formality or observance

Punctilious—conscientious, attentive to details

Purveyor—one who gives or supplies

Putative—supposed

Quelling—suppressing

Raj—imperial British rule of India

Rapscallion—a rascal

Ratiocination—methodical and logical reasoning

Recidivist—one who returns (or tends to return) to his former ways

Recondite—difficult to understand due to high scholarly level

Recusant—religiously nonconformist

Redacted—edited, revised, converted to written form

Reification—an instance of regarding an idea as if it were factual

Religiose—highly and showily religious

Remonstrate—to protest

Repast—meal

Repercussion—effect, result, consequence

Retrogressive—declining to a worse condition or state

Rigmarole—a drawn-out and meaningless procedure

Riled—angered

Riposte—swift retaliation

Rote—mechanically repeated

Ruminate—to think about

Sacerdotal—priestly

Sacrosanct—inviolably sacred

Salvo—a simultaneous discharge of weaponry

Sanctimonious—hypocritically pretending to be pious

Sans—without

Sapid—agreeable to the mind

Seamy—pertaining to sex and other base subjects

Seditious—revolutionary; desiring to overthrow a government

Seriate—coming in a series

Sinuous—complex

Skein—a tangle

Slipstream—a secondary force that carries things along with it

Sobriquet—a respectful or affectionate nickname

Sojourn—a temporary stay in a place; to temporarily stay in a place

Solecism—a violation of etiquette

Solicitous—deeply concerned with

Somberly—unhappily

Souse—to immerse in water

Spate—a sudden flood

Spawn—to come (or bring) into being; to develop

Spurious—false, bogus, counterfeit

Staccato—abrupt and disconnected

Stanch—to stop or check

Status quo ante—the former situation

Straitjacketed—severely restricted or hindered

Stultifying—crippling; rendering useless or worthless

Stymied—*(adj.)* baffled, obstructed, blocked

Subsume—to include within something larger

Supercilious—scornful

Supererogatory—performing beyond expectation

Supernal—celestial

Suppliant—one who humbly requests (a boon)

Supposititious—fraudulently substituted for the genuine

Sycophant—a flatterer or hanger-on

Synopsize—to describe in brief

Tableau—a graphic description

Tack—a new course of action based on changed circumstances

Tawdry—showy but cheap

Tergiversator—one who leaves an organization

Tethering—tying or restricting

Throttlehold—an influence that suppresses freedom

Titan—a giant

Tonsured—to have one's head shaved (especially prior to being initiated into monasticism)

Torpor—inactivity, dullness, lack of consciousness

Tout—to advertise (or sell) in a gross manner

Traduce—to subject a person to malicious false statements meant to cause humiliation

Trammel—an obstacle

Transvestism—dressing in a style associated with the opposite gender

Treacly—excessively sweet

Triumphalism—considering one's religion superior to others

Turgescent—pompous

Turpitude—baseness, vileness

Tussle—a rough struggle

Tutelage—guidance, instruction

Unassailable—indisputable, irrefutable

Unctuous—of self-serving hypocritical spirituality or general behavior

Unviable—impossible to accomplish

Upend—to turn upside down

Uppity—*(disparaging)* desiring improvement or recognition beyond one's customary status

Vapid—lifeless, uninteresting

Venial—forgivable or minor

Vot ary— a devout believer

Weltering—tossing about

Zamindar—a feudal landlord in India

Zeitgeist—the spirit or mood of an era

Bengali and Sanskrit Quotations

Citations from *śāstra* and the writings of *ācāryas* that appear in this book—listed alphabetically according to the first line cited, in the original form that they appear, i.e., not adjusted according to Sanskrit grammatical *sandhi* rules.

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Footnotes

* References for *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* are according to the same system used for *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta.*

† From its fourth year, seventh edition, the *Gauḍīya* numbering system changed. Instead of restarting the numbering in each new issue, page numbers became cumulative throughout consecutive editions and were restarted in each new year of publication. *Gauḍīya* 4.7 began at p. 155.

* Vedic learning also admits the importance of sense perception and logic, but only as corollaries to scriptural evidence.

* At that time in India, Westerners and things Western were generally referred to as English, British, or European. Even Americans, Australians, and others were broadly considered European.

† The 1871 census indicates that in the late 1860s there were about 125,000 British in India, among a total population exceeding 200 million.

‡ "The White Man's Burden"—an influential poem by Rudyard Kipling.

§ Although the concept of human rights was yet to jell, nor the term yet to enter everyday parlance, its evolution in Western thought and polity was well under way.

* *Bodhinī*—awakening, enlightening.

* "Be strong, my young friends—that is my advice to you. You will be nearer to heaven through football than through study of the *Gītā.* These are bold words, but I must say them, for I love you. I know where the shoe pinches. I have gained a little experience. You will understand the *Gītā* better with your biceps, your muscles, a little stronger." (*The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda,* vol. 3 [Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1960], 242).

* This is a list of common misconceptions or misrepresentations of *bhakti.* The notion that (what traditionally was misunderstood to be) *bhakti* is for the weak, lazy, foolish, or otherworldly was implied by the action-oriented, "masculine" presentation of modern-educated reformers (see vol. 2, p. 3). *Svarāj* activists protested that the *bhakti* process inculcated a "slave mentality," which they so much detested (see vol. 2, p. 71). "Cryptic riddles" particularly refers to *bāula* and *kartābhajā* songs (see vol. 2, pp. 127, 129).

* For an explanation of *bhāgavata-paramparā,* see vol. 2, pp. 228–31.

* *Choṭa*—small, minor, less important; *loka*—people.

* Nikola Tesla—(1856–1943) U.S. inventor, of Serbian parentage, whose contributions included the first practical alternating-current electric motor.

*

prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ
ahaṅkāra-vimūḍhātmā kartāham iti manyate

The spirit soul bewildered by the influence of false ego thinks himself the doer of activities that are actually carried out by the three modes of material nature. (Bg 3.27)

* Although in today's multicultural ethos this assessment may seem harsh or perhaps unthinkable, it accurately represents the great majority of Western colonialists' attitude at that time, which was considered axiomatic and hence was the basis of their "benevolent" polity. For instance, upon arriving in India in 1813, the governor general marquis of Hastings wrote: "The Hindoo appears a being merely limited to mere animal functions, and even in them indifferent... with no higher intellect than a dog." (Quoted in: Satsvarūpa dāsa Gosvāmī, "The First Indologists," in the appendix of *Readings in Vedic Literature* [Los Angeles: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1990])

* These words are as applicable today as then.

* During Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's presence, *Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta* was published in Telugu, and *Jaiva Dharma* was featured serially in the *Harmonist* in English (but was discontinued after Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's passing, before completion).

† See a translation of this verse in vol. 1, p. 136.

* *Bhāgavatārka-marīci-mālā* (Collected rays of the sun of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*)—a book by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura consisting of a topical selection of verses from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

* Austrian-born Stella Kramrisch was the first art historian from the West to teach at the University of Calcutta. As a distinguished scholar, author, teacher, museum curator, and editor, she was influential among scholars both Western and Indian for shaping theories of and attitudes toward Indian culture.

* Among Indians at that time, it was uncommon and highly prestigious either to study in England or to attain a Ph.D.

* "From transcendental sound comes the cessation of further mundane birth" is a translation of *anāvṛttiḥ śabdāt,* the last words of *Vedānta-sūtra* (4.4.22). "All glory to the bliss of the name of Murāri" refers to verse 1.1.9 of Sanātana Gosvāmī's *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta:*

> All glories, all glories to Lord Murāri (Kṛṣṇa) in the form of His all-ecstatic name! If any living being puts aside such tasks as meditation, ritual worship, and social duties and even once takes the Lord's holy name, the name will grant him liberation. That holy name is the greatest source of eternal pleasure and is my very life and ornament.

* This mention of freedom probably alludes at least partially to the then raging struggle for Indian independence.

* The reference to "stranded students" apparently refers to Indian students in Britain who were unable to afford homeward passage. (See *Gauḍīya* 14.191)

* Zetland is another name for Shetland, a group of islands off Scotland. Indian chroniclers mostly render Ronaldshay as the earl of "Zetland," whereas British usage prefers "Shetland." Lord Ronaldshay was a former M.P. for Hornsey (1907–16) and from 1935 to 1940 served as India's secretary of state.

* Although this exchange between Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī and Zetland probably took place after Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's *tirobhāva,* as did Lady Willingdon's statement (see vol. 2, p. 40) to him, they are recorded herein to indicate common attitudes toward the Gauḍīya Mission preachers.

* Almost certainly this interview never took place.

* Goebbels is notorious as Hitler's minister of propaganda. Yet at that time, Britain and other world powers maintained an ambivalent attitude toward Nazism and the Third Reich, and Nazi Germany was not considered intrinsically culpable. In fact, Śrīmad Bon Mahārāja had been referred to Hitler by Britain's Sir Samuel Hoare.

* Gaṇḍakī-*Śilā,* Gomatī-*śilā,* and Govardhana-*śilā*—worshipable forms of the Supreme Lord manifested as certain stones found in specific holy places. Gaṇḍakī is the river in which *śālagrāma-śilās* manifest; thus Gaṇḍakī-*śilā* is another name for *śālagrāma-śilā.* The Gomatī estuary is at Dvarakā.

† Śrīmad Gosvāmī Mahārāja returned to India in September 1937.

‡ *Sree Krishna Chaitanya* was intended to be in three volumes, of which only the first, a hefty tome covering Mahāprabhu's early pastimes, was published at that time. Volume 2 was written but not published until the twenty-first century. Volume 3 was never written.

* See also "Even though we consider... *vipralambha*" (vol. 1, p. 287).

* Māyic—of the world of *māyā;* material, illusory.

* Toofan Mail—a well-known express train plying from Howrah (Calcutta) via Mathurā to

Delhi and beyond.

* This and other contemporary published accounts of preaching in the West are quite upbeat, contrasting with the apparent disappointment of a returned preacher (vol. 2, p. 363), the judgment "largely unsuccessful" (vol. 2, p. 392), and the comments of Śrīmad A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and Śrīmad B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja. (See *Conversations with Śrīla Prabhupāda,* 4.186)

* Although in religious contexts *Semites* may refer to followers of any Abrahamic religion, but particularly indicates Jews, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī generally used it specifically to indicate Christians.

* For their arguments, see vol. 1, pp. 188–90.

† For an excerpt from *The Chaitanya Movement,* see vol. 3, pp. 157–61. See also "By the Way" [a review of *The Chaitanya Movement*], *Harmonist* 29.1.25–29 and 29.2.57–60. See also Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's usage of *Godhead* (vol. 1, p. 330).

* In *Jaiva Dharma,* Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura offered some Gauḍīya perspectives on Islamic doctrine, in a few words attributed to Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī and in two descriptions of exchanges with apparently fictitious Muslims. The *Harmonist* (28.275–79, 337–42, and 374–78) gave further angles in the article "A Talk with a Maulvi" (Maulvi—a title accorded for knowledge of and adherence to Islamic orthopraxy), who appears also to be a literary device—as no information is given about him, his style of "speech" closely resembles that of the Gauḍīya protagonist, and his brief "responses" appear to be little more than manufactured prompts.

† Insularity in Indian society was manifest in minimal social interaction between persons of differing religions, castes, economic status, and linguistic and geographic groups, within which (especially religions and castes) subgroups abounded.

* Śrī Viṣṇusvāmī's *Sarvajña-bhāṣya* establishes *śuddhādvaita-vāda,* Śrī Nimbārka's *Pārijāta-saurabha-bhāṣya* establishes *dvaitādvaita-vāda,* Śrī Rāmānujācārya's *Śrī-bhāṣya Vedānta-sūtra* establishes *viśiṣṭādvaita-vāda,* and Śrī Madhvācārya's *Pūrṇaprajña-bhāṣya* establishes *śuddha-dvaita-vāda.*

* *Svakīya-vāda*—the doctrine that Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are married. This is opposed to orthodox Gauḍīya *siddhānta,* which upholds *parakīya-vāda,* the doctrine of Their paramour love. For an overview of this complex discussion, see: O.B.L. Kapoor, *The Philosophy and Religion of Sri Caitanya* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1976), 221–30. See also Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's commentary on *Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.37.

† *Digvijaya*—"victory in all directions." *Mūla-grantha* means an original book without commentaries.

* After Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's *tirobhāva,* Paṇḍita Viṭṭhalācārya's unpublished commentary on these *Upaniṣads* was lost.

† Stringent caste rules, enforced on pain of expulsion from their caste, forbad born *brāhmaṇas* to eat food cooked, served, or brought by, or in the company of, persons of lower birth. Thus it was remarkable that these two *paṇḍitas* of orthodox background participated in the indiscriminatory distribution of *prasāda* conducted by the Gauḍīya Maṭha.

‡ See vol. 2, p. 82.

* The Śrīnivāsācārya mentioned here was a prominent disciple of Śrī Nimbārka, and presumably Sudarśanācārī was also.

* The full verse is:

madhyāhne 'nyonya-saṅgodita-vividha-vikārādi-bhūṣā-pramugdhau
vāmyotkaṇṭhātilolau smara-makha-lalitādy-āli-narmāpta-śātau
dolāraṇyāmbu-vaṁśī-hṛti-rati-madhu-pānārka-pūjādi-līlau
rādhā-kṛṣṇau sa-tṛṣṇau parijana-ghaṭayā sevyamānau smarāmi

When the Divine Couple meet at midday They appear very beautiful and charming, being ornamented with various ecstatic symptoms. Although feigning indifference, They were filled with longing to meet each other. As They performed the sacred rituals of amorous love, They greatly enjoyed the joking words spoken by Lalitā and the other *gopīs.* They eagerly enjoyed transcendental pastimes in the forest, in the waters of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, and riding on the swing. They enjoyed various pastimes such as drinking honey, worshiping the sun god, and Rādhā stealing Kṛṣṇa's flute. I meditate on Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, who are served by Their eternal associates and are very eager to enjoy various transcendental pastimes in the middle period of the day. (*Govinda-līlāmṛta* 8.1)

* See also Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's commentaries on Cb 1.13.177 and 1.13.187.

† See "Puṣṭi-mārga," *Boktṛtābalī* 1.135–38.

* *Stava*—a hymn of praise composed in Sanskrit.

* The Great Exhibition held in 1851 in Crystal Palace, London, had presented India as the "Jewel in the Crown" of imperial Britain's might and glory.

* Quoted in full in vol. 2, p. 31.

* Traditionally, groups characterized as untouchable were those whose occupations involved polluting activities, particularly: disposing of dead cattle or working with their hides, contact with emissions of the human body such as feces, urine, sweat, and spittle (a category including

sweepers and washermen), and killing, whether by slaughtering, hunting, or fishing. Likewise classed as untouchable were castes whose members traditionally ate the flesh of cattle, pigs, or fowl—a genre comprising most of the primitive tribes in India—and also Muslims and Christians, although these, being outside the pale of Hinduism, were viewed as categorically different.

Untouchables were subjected to many social restrictions, which increased in severity from northern to southern India. In many cases untouchables were segregated in hamlets outside the boundaries of towns or villages. They were forbidden entry to many temples, most schools, and to wells that the higher castes drew water from. Higher-caste people considered that to contact an untouchable was seriously polluting, requiring much remedial ritual. At one time in South India certain untouchable groups were forced to live a nocturnal existence, for even seeing them was deemed polluting. Such severe restrictions led many untouchables to seek a degree of emancipation by conversion—up till that time mostly to Islam, but later also to Buddhism or Christianity.

* See "Gandhiji's Ten Questions" (vol. 3, pp. 129–36).

† Gandhi famously took time from his multiple engagements to daily spin cotton on his spinning wheel, in pursuance of his call to all Indians to spin cotton at home and thus break British control of the Indian textile trade.

* Many analysts of Indian history feel that, more than Gandhi, it was Bose who forced the British to quit India. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda also held this view.

* This version, told by Śrī B.P. Prapanna, was relayed by Śrī Bhakti Cāru Swami of ISKCON. It is offered as an alternative version to that given in *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta* (1.74), wherein it is described that when asked by Netaji to give men for the freedom struggle, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura parried him by saying, "For your national propaganda you require very strong men, but these people are very weak; you can see how they are very skinny. So don't put your glance upon them. Let them eat something and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa."

* Some devotees question the authenticity of this anecdote, told by Jati Śekhara Prabhu, doubting that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would send such an important man to the *pūjārīs,* or that the *pūjārīs* would engage an outsider in handling deity paraphernalia.

* The full verse is given in vol. 3, p. 121.

* This is in reference to a well-known tale from *Hitopadeśa* of a jackal who, while slinking around a village, fell into a vat of indigo, and upon his return to the forest in a coat of shimmering blue, the other animals, even the lions, were awed by his unusual appearance and accepted him as the new king of the jungle. He fully exploited this post to his own advantage, until one day, when impelled by his natural propensity, he let forth a long howl. Hearing that,

the other animals understood their new king's true identity and drove him from the throne. The moral: however one may paint himself, his inner colors will eventually show through.

* Subsequent scholars have noted that this list of *apa-sampradāyas* is incomplete. Names of more sects appear in vol. 3, pp. 154–55.

† This fact renders it impossible to precisely classify many individuals, groups, and relationships between groups. Thus, for instance, some scholars consider *bāulas* a sect of *sahajiyās,* and others vice versa.

* This momentous composition is featured in vol. 3, pp. 13–27.

* Āryāvarta—North India.

† This echoes a statement of *Āditya Purāṇa,* quoted in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* (4.360):

> *harau ruṣṭe gurus trātā gurau ruṣṭe na kaścana*
> *tasmāt sarva-prayatnena gurum eva prasādayet*
>
> If Kṛṣṇa is angry at a devotee, his guru can save him (by praying at the Lord's lotus feet for forgiveness of his disciple), but if a disciple angers his guru, nobody can rescue him. Therefore, with all effort strive to please your guru.

* Commenting on this verse, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī states that there is great fault both in revealing a mantra without vetting a disciple, and in accepting a mantra without engaging in the duties of a disciple, such as personal service to the guru.

* See also the discussion on how the guru is nondifferent from Śrī Rādhā (vol. 2, pp. 255–56).

* *Haviṣya, haviṣyānna*—certain foods described by *śāstra* as fit for offering in sacrifice. In Bengal, generally this constitutes boiled rice (of the "sunned," not parboiled, variety most common in Bengal) with ghee but no salt, spices, or condiments, although soaked (but not boiled) mung may also be taken with it. *Smārtas* consider *haviṣya* the purest food, to be taken once daily only by persons observing religious vows following the death of a relative.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's commentary clarifies that, contrary to popular misinterpretation, this Purāṇic statement (reiterated in *Caitanya-bhāgavata*) is not meant to encourage people to eat fish, but rather extols Purī as so sacred that consuming even the worst food therein is as purifying as eating sacrificial offerings.

* See "Aprākṛta-sahaja-dharma o Prākṛta-sahaja-dharma," *Boktṛtābali* 1.130–34.

* As described in Cc 3.5, Śrīla Rāmananda Rāya dealt most intimately with two young girls while training them to dance for Lord Jagannātha's pleasure, yet because he had no motive for

personal sense gratification his mind remained undisturbed.

* *Vairāgya-vidyā* is from Cc 2.6.254. For a description of the immoralist *bābājīs,* see vol. 1, pp. 169–70.

† Choṭa Haridāsa's "death sentence" concerns his banishment by Mahāprabhu for a slight infringement of rules proscribing renunciants from intermingling with women, and his subsequent suicide. (See Cc 3.2)

* See also Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's description of Padmā-*nīti* (vol. 1, p. 176).

* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī suggested a Vaiṣṇava version of *pañcopāsanā:* worship of *Śrī-guru, Śrī-nāma, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* Śrī Rādhā-Govinda, and Śrī Gaurasundara (Hk 1.83).

* The verse beginning *arcye viṣṇau śilā-dhīḥ* (see vol. 1, p. 285) condemns the attitude described in this quote.

† For many generations, Raghunandana Bhaṭṭācārya's writings had tremendous influence on Bengali society. There are different opinions on his birthdate. According to some scholars he was born while Lord Caitanya was still present. In a lecture on 12 March 1933, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī stated that Raghunandana Bhaṭṭācārya was born seventy-five to eighty years after Mahāprabhu's presence.

* Rūpa Gosvāmī's definition of *śuddha-bhakti* is given in Brs 1.1.11 (quoted in vol. 1, p. 283).

* Matsya—fish.

† Similarly, in *Prārthanā* and in the penultimate verse of *Bhakti-ratnākara* there is reference to the Gaura-*parivāra.*

* For a detailed analysis of the caste Goswamis' parasitical existence, see vol. 3, pp. 157–61.

† A Bengali proverb describes a person who tried to make a statue of Lord Śiva, but being inexpert, instead made an image resembling a monkey.

* Śrī Gopījanavallabhānanda-deva actually went on to fulfill this mandate, particularly by penning several scholarly Vaiṣṇava books.

* *Garbhādhāna-saṁskāra*—a rite, essential in upholding caste purity, performed prior to conception.

* Outside the Gauḍīya sphere, the Ārya Samāj had already begun bestowing the *upavīta* without caste discrimination, including to untouchables.

† For the full verse, see vol. 1, p. 285.

‡ It is not known from whom and how Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī received an *upavīta* and Brahma-*gāyatrī.* Photographs of Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī previous to his initiation by Bābājī Mahārāja show him wearing an *upavīta.* Clearly Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was aware that Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī had received Brahma-*gāyatrī* and approved his conferring it to disciples, evidenced by the fact that he directed Śrī Jagadīśa Bhakti Pradīpa and others to receive Brahma-*gāyatrī* in *upanayanam* from Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī. (See vol. 2, p. 293)

* This system was established under the guidance of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in pursuance of the tradition that must have been followed in Jagannātha miśra's household at the time of Caitanya Mahāprabhu's pastimes.

* Family names clearly indicate caste. Bandhopādhyāya, Chattopādhyāya, Mukhopādhyāya, and Cakravartī are instantly recognizable as Bengali *brāhmaṇa* names.

† For the relevant verse, beginning *rākṣasāḥ kalim,* see vol. 2, p. 109.

* *Arcye viṣṇau śilā-dhīḥ*—See vol. 1, p. 285.

† For Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's thorough treatment of caste considerations, see *Brāhmaṇa o Vaiṣṇavera Tāratamya-viṣayaka Siddhānta* (available in English as *Brāhmaṇa and Vaiṣṇava*). For a sample of scriptural injunctions compiled by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura that delineate the relative positions of Vaiṣṇavas and *brāhmaṇas,* see Cc 3.16.29, commentary.

* See description of *pañca-makāra-sādhana* (vol. 2, p. 149).

† *Sādhikā*—female religious practioner. In *bāula* and *prākṛta-sahajiyā* usage, it is a glorified term for a freely available woman of their cult.

* Several Arabic and Farsi words had, either directly or in modified form, entered Bengali. Many, such as this usage of *āula,* were current mostly among Muslims.

† The English word *dervish* is derived from the Farsi *daraveśa.*

* *Hijrā*—a member of a community of effeminate men and androgynes, unique to South Asia and whose sexual status is not classifiable with any transsexual or similar grouping elsewhere.

* *Ativāḍī* (too great) is pronounced as *atibārī.*

* This incident is related quite differently by *ativāḍīs.*

* Various versions state that Rūpa Kavirāja was a disciple of either Śrīnivāsa Ācārya or Hemalatā Ṭhākurāṇī, but his present-day followers in Vṛndāvana claim that he was a disciple of Śrī Mukunda dāsa Gosvāmī, a disciple of Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī. For mention of

Rūpa Kavirāja by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, see vol. 2, p. 205.

† Present-day Vṛndāvana-based followers of Rūpa Kavirāja fast on Ekādaśī.

‡ For more information, see: Haberman, *Acting as a Wa y of Salvation,* 98–108.

* *Vara*— best.

* See also Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's rejection of *gaurāṅga-nāgarīs* as *nirviśeṣa-vādīs* (vol. 2, p. 143), letters featured in *Patrāvalī* 2.28 and 3.57, and a list (in Sj 261) of some *Gauḍīya* articles explaining the above and other faults of *gaura-nāgara-vāda*.

* As described in relation to "Lalitā Sakhī." (See vol. 2, p. 163)

* For instance, in his book *The History and Literature of the Gaudiya Vaishnavas and their Relation to Medieval Vaishnava Schools,* Saṁvidānanda dāsa, a disciple of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, listed several books that he maintained were most likely forged in the name of Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura by the Nityānanda-*vaṁśa* Goswamis, who hired people to write whatever they wanted. An example of deliberate buckling of history is found in *Nityānanda-vaṁśa-vistāra,* wherein Lord Caitanya purportedly instructed Lord Nityānanda to marry and establish a seminal line of gurus—which claim Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura vehemently opposed. Such shrewd inventions were used by the Nityānanda-*vaṁśa* Goswamis to "substantiate" their "hereditary sanctity."

* Kālīdāsa Nāga, a Calcutta University lecturer on ancient Indian history and culture, had once visited Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura at Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha and listened to him for several hours.

* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's having stated that this verse contains Mahāprabhu's *mahā-vākyas* is quoted in vol. 2, p. 28.

† Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura also stated that the essential import of *ahaṁ brahmāsmi* is expressed by Mahāprabhu's teaching *gopī-bhartuḥ pada-kamalayor dāsa-dāsānudāsaḥ:* "I identify Myself as the servant of the servant of the servants of Kṛṣṇa, the maintainer of the *gopīs.*" (See the full verse in vol. 2, p. 122)

‡ *Ahaṁ brahmāsmi* is from *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 1.4.10, *tat tvam asi* from *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.8.7, *prajñānamānandam* [an uncommon rendering] *brahma* from *Aitareya Upaniṣad* 3.1.3, and *ekam evādvitīyam* from *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.2.1–2. These four principal *mahā-vākyas* are as listed in "Prameyāntargata Bhedābheda-vicāra," chap. 18 of *Jaiva Dharma,* wherein Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura analyzes them according to Gauḍīya *siddhānta.* However in Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya's *Maṭha-āmnāya Stotra,* the fourth is given as *ayam ātmā brahma.* For a translation of the *tṛṇād api* verse, see vol. 2, p. 220.

* Vaiṣṇavas also predominated in Midnapore District (due to Śyāmānandī influence there), in

the Sunderban jungle region of the Gaṅgā delta (which extends over much of the southern extremities of both East and West Bengal), and in pockets throughout West Bengal.

* See vol. 3, p. 34.

† For instance, Vivekananda stated, "The people of this land must be fed and clothed, must be awakened, must be made more fully active. Otherwise they will become inert, as inert as trees and stones. So I say, 'Eat large quantities of fish and meat, my boy!'" (*The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda,* vol. 5 [Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1995])

Apparently Vivekananda subscribed to the view (not uncommon among certain Hindus, especially *śāktas*), that vegetarianism rendered one physically and mentally weak, and thus pitiably tractable. He believed that meat-eating aids personal development, and that it would help Indians become strong and thus willing and capable of banishing colonialism. This, as did other teachings of Swami Vivekananda's, directly promoted various activities described in *śāstra* as grossly sinful and thus opposed to the real, transcendental purpose of life.

For more of Vivekananda's "wisdom," see vol. 2, p. 5, fn *.

* *Yā're dekhile... eseche re* is from a popular song about Gaura-Nitāi.

† The Sanskrit/Bengali word *amedhya* refers to untouchable items such as liquor and flesh.

‡ This anecdote is related in *Gauḍīya* 17.488–89. Although therein Ramakrishna's name is not directly mentioned, it is understood both from the context, and from the reference to the tested person as "Rā...".

Pratibimba—reflection; *chāyā*—shadow; *ratyābhāsa*—slight similarity to attraction for Kṛṣṇa. *Pratibimba-ratyābhāsa*—semblance of *rati* in a person with desires for material enjoyment and liberation. *Chāyā-ratyābhāsa*—semblance of *rati* in a person without firm attachment to Kṛṣṇa. (See *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.3.41–51)

* The Bengali adage *nācte neme ghomṭā ṭānā* refers to a girl come to dance in public, who upon seeing elders present, feels shy and wants to draw the veil of her sari to cover her head. Although such shyness is normally appropriate for a young girl in the presence of elders, it is contradictory for a stage dancer.

* Bodh Gayā—(in present-day Bihar) popularly accepted as the place of Gautama Buddha's enlightenment.

* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī generally referred to Buddha as Śākya Siṁha, which in Buddhist lore is accepted as the pre-enlightenment name of Gautama Buddha, the founder of modern Buddhism. Citing that Śākya Siṁha was born in Kapilavastu (now in Nepal), Śrīmad B.P. Keśava Mahārāja (formerly Śrī Vinoda Bihārī Brahmacārī) and the Gauḍīya scholar Śrī

Govardhana dāsa have presented cases for the difference between Śākya Siṁha and the avatar Buddha who in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.3.24) was predicted to appear in the province of Gayā.

Writing after Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's passing, Keśava Mahārāja stated that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī considered Śākya Siṁha and the avatar Buddha to be different and deemed Śākya Siṁha merely a vastly learned person who had attained some inner realizations.

Govardhana dāsa cited from *Skanda Purāṇa* a description of avatar Buddha ruling as a king, including punishing wrongdoers. He concluded that Jayadeva Gosvāmī was unaware of this *Skanda Purāṇa* description and thus in *Daśāvatāra-stotra* had mistakenly described Buddha as promoting nonviolence. This portrayal of Śrī Jayadeva seems untenable in light of the respect accorded to *Daśāvatāra-stotra* by all standard Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas,* and even by Māyāvādīs and *smārtas.*

Moreover, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's quoting SB 1.3.24 in the above-mentioned anecdote relating to the founder of Buddhism does not support that he upheld the two-Buddha thesis; so also the publishing in 1934 in the *Harmonist* (31.3.59–63) of an article stating: "Modern Buddhism connects itself with the name of Śākya Siṁha as its historical founder. The Buddha who is regarded as the avatar of Viṣṇu is identifiable with Śākya Siṁha.... Buddha Śākya-muni taught that the practice of pity for the suffering of others is higher than selfish enjoyment. The Vaiṣṇavas approve this teaching of the Buddha in opposition to the Veda, but they nevertheless wholly reject the rest of the teachings of the Buddha, declaring them to be unmixed atheism." In another article, the *Harmonist* (31.2.40–41) stated: "There were evidently two interpretations of his [the Buddha's] teachings, but the Vaiṣṇavite or theistic interpretation has not come down to us intact; the negative part alone has survived."

This topic requires more research.

* For a list of the ten offenses, see: Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, "Teachings to Rūpa Gosvāmī," chap. 1 of *Teachings of Lord Caitanya.*

* *Prāṇa*—life. "Prāṇa Gaura-Nityānanda" means "Gaura-Nityānanda, our life."

† Śrīśa Rāya Chaudhuri was an early supporter, mentioned in vol. 1, p. 68.

* Caraṇa dāsa was another with reservations about loud chanting. (See vol. 2, p. 161)

* The phrase *gaura-vihita-kīrtana,* well-known to followers of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, appears in his song that begins *śuddha-bhakata-caraṇa-reṇu.*

* *Rāgas* and *rāgiṇīs*—Vedic musical modes.

* In his biography (by O.B.L. Kapoor) it is stated that Caraṇa dāsa did not disapprove of audible chanting of the *mahā-mantra* if it was simultaneously counted, and that he had been

observed sitting and counting while others engaged in loud *mahā-mantra kīrtana.* Even so, such counting is another speculation, having no precedent or support in the recorded behavior of Śrīman Mahāprabhu or His followers. And it is clear that for *kīrtana,* Caraṇa dāsa and his acolytes favored his own "mantra" over the *mahā-mantra.*

* *Cchuṅco*—rat, mole, slimy person. In colloquial Bengali, *cchuṅcora kettana* means a disgusting noise (*kettana*—a corruption of the word *kīrtana*). Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura referred not only to the "Nitāi-Gaura, Rādhe-Śyāma" perversion but to all strains of concocted mantras as *cchuṅcora kīrtana.*

* Caraṇa dāsa and his "substitute" for the *mahā-mantra* are further described in vol. 1, p. 35, and vol. 2, pp. 161–64.

* Standard Gauḍīya *siddhānta* is that *svarūpa-siddhi* (attainment of the perfectional stage while in this world) enables one to taste *rasa* but is to be consummated in *vastu-siddhi* (entrance into the spiritual world in a transcendental body). This is discussed in *Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta* (e.g., at the end of 6.3).

* *Laulyam* (eagerness or greed) being the price to attain Kṛṣṇa is described in the famous verse:

> *kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-bhāvitā matiḥ*
> *krīyatāṁ yadi kuto 'pi labhyate*
> *tatra laulyam api mūlyam ekalaṁ*
> *janma-koṭi-sukṛtair na labhyate*
>
> Pure devotional service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness cannot be had even by pious activity throughout hundreds and thousands of lives. It can be attained only by paying one price: intense greed to obtain it. If it is available somewhere, one must purchase it without delay. (*Padyāvalī* 14, Cc 2.8.70)

* "External insignia of sectarianism" presumably refers to Gauḍīya *tilaka,* and "pseudo-renunciation" to the *bābājīs'* short cloth and *kaupīna*.

* *Ahaṁ bhogī*—"I am the enjoyer," from the description in *Bhagavād-gītā* (16.14) of the demonic nature.

* *Svakīya, parakīya*—the two divisions (i.e., within and outside of wedlock) of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes with His eternal transcendental female companions. (See vol. 2, p. 63, fn *)

†

> *śrī-caitanya-mano 'bhīṣṭaṁ sthāpitaṁ yena bhū-tale*
> *svayaṁ rūpaḥ kadā mahyaṁ dadāti sva-padāntikam*

When will Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, who has established within this material world the mission to fulfil the inmost desire (*mano-'bhīṣṭa*) of Lord Caitanya, give me shelter under his lotus feet?

This famous verse, from the beginning of Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura's *Prema-bhakti-candrikā,* is generally understood to indicate Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's having broadcast to the world Lord Caitanya's experience of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's deepest feelings of separation from Kṛṣṇa.

(See Cc 2.1.58–74 and 2.13.134) For another explanation of Lord Caitanya's *mano-'bhīṣṭa,* see vol. 2, p. 419, fn *.

* This analysis is summarized in vol. 2, p. 147, fn ‡, and referred to in vol. 1, p. 51.

† *Rādhitaḥ*—served, worshiped; *anayā*—by whom; *iti*—thus. This statement is derived from *anayārādhitaḥ,* "She who worships the Lord" (SB 10.30.28), which indicates Rādhā (who otherwise is unnamed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*), in contradistinction to the parallel statement *mīyate anayā iti māyā.* (See vol. 1, p. 177)

* "Four-anna *bhāva*"—See vol. 2, pp. 97–98.

† This analogy indicates giving up substance and accepting the false.

* The full verse from which this line is taken is given in vol. 2, p. 122.

† For his further stating the impossibility of *abhidheya* and *prayojana* without *sambandha-jñāna,* see the two verses he composed that begin *siddhānta vihīna haile* (vol. 3, p. 18).

* The term *lobhamayī-śraddhā* had been used and explained by previous *ācāryas*—for instance, by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in "Prameyāntargata Abhidheya Vicāra—Rāgānugā Sādhana-bhakti" of *Jaiva Dharma,* and in the concluding portion of his *Bhakti-tattva-viveka,* wherein qualifications for various levels of *bhakti* is discussed.

* An instance of his approval of such discussion is given in vol. 2, p. 216.

† *Prathamaṁ nāmnaḥ... parama-śreṣṭham*—See vol. 2, p. 181.

‡ Topics of Dhruva Mahārāja and Prahlāda Mahārāja are preliminary to those of Kṛṣṇa's Vṛndāvana pastimes. (See vol. 1, p. 275, fn *)

* The translation of the above verse is included within this sentence.

‡ Technical discussion of *Gīta-govinda* and similar esoteric works was conducted in the *alaṅkāra-śāstra* module of the Gauḍīya Maṭha's Bhakti-śāstrī courses.

* *Kīrtana-prabhāve smaraṇa haibe* is from "Vaiṣṇava Ke?" 19. For the full song, see vol. 3, pp. 28–32. The original words—*kīrtana-prabhāve, smaraṇa svabhāve*—are often rendered as above.

* The analogy of a cow stuck in mud refers to a person caught in a misconception and who must suffer its sticky consequences.

† See also the letter re *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā* and related topics (vol. 2, pp. 166–67).

* For the full verse, see vol. 3, p. 121.

* Śeṣaśāyī—the place within Vraja-*maṇḍala* where the deity of Śeṣaśāyī Viṣṇu resides. *Yat te sujāta-caraṇāmburuhaṁ staneṣu*—a key verse (SB 10.31.19) expressing the depth of the *gopīs'* feelings for Kṛṣṇa, recited by Lord Caitanya when visiting Śeṣaśāyī (Cc 2.18.64–65).

* According to some, the priest was Śrī Bipina Bihārī Goswami, the *dīkṣā*-guru of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. But that supposition appears to be a confusing of similar anecdotes, because Bipina Bihārī Goswami passed away in 1918, before any known visits of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to Vraja-*maṇḍala* accompanied by followers.

* See also the section "To Be a Vraja-vāsī" (vol. 3, pp. 91–96).

† *Sarasvatī-jayaśrī* records that in 1922 Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī fully bathed in Radhā-kuṇḍa. Yet several of his disciples have stated that in later years he did not. Thus his doing so in 1935 was clearly an exception.

‡ *Sarvātma-snapanam*—See vol. 1, p. 121, fn *.

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu means "the ocean of the nectar of devotional mellows" and is also the title of a famous work by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

* This line from *Prema-bhakti-candrikā* was often quoted by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and is cited several times within this book.

* For Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's comments on the Māyāpur Pradarśanī demonstrating how Rādhā-kuṇḍa is exclusively for Gauḍīyas, see vol. 2, pp. 62–63.

* *Naraka-kuṇḍa*—"pit of hell." This also hints of a pun, as *naraka-kuṇḍa* sounds like *nā rādhā-kuṇḍa,* "not Rādhā-kuṇḍa."

† For further discussion of the *Upaniṣad* lectures at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, see the section "Vaiṣṇavism and Vedic Literature" (vol. 1, pp. 195–200). For more on residence at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, see "A Lecture at Rādhā-kuṇḍa" (vol. 3, pp. 97–107).

* These descriptions by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura were probably applicable only to very few, if

any, professional *Bhāgavata* reciters, and might have been intentionally exaggerated to emphasize the overwhelmingly materialistic, if not so grossly impious, motivation of the reciters.

† C.f. *dharmaḥ projjhita-kaitavo 'tra:* "Herein cheating religion is totally rejected" (SB 1.1.2).

* *Sarāga-* and *nirāga-vaktās* had been commented on by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī (*Bhakti-sandarbha, Anuccheda* 203) and other Gauḍīya *ācāryas.*

* *Rūpānuga-vara*—See the *praṇāma-mantra* for Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura (vol. 1, p. xvii).

† Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is thus alluded to in the extract in vol. 1, p. 214.

Srotāra—"of the current."

Mahārāja Bhagīratha is described in the *Purāṇas* (e.g., SB 9.9).

* Jāhnavā-*dhārā*—the preceptorial line from Śrīmatī Jāhnavā-devī, the wife and pleasure potency of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu.

† This point is discussed in vol. 1, p. 203.

‡ Since others have already publicly violated this policy of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's, to retain polite silence within this book would serve no meaningful purpose.

§ This statement was made in a complex allegorical manner, the details of which can be appreciated only by persons familiar with Bengali.

* Rūpa Kavirāja—See vol. 2, p. 132.

Reference to the *ativāḍī apa-sampradāya* indicates the attitude of considering oneself greater than an *ācārya,* which Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī discerned in the so-called adherents of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

† Quite possibly this letter was written to Śrī Lalitā Prasāda himself.

* "Strictly the organ of the *śuddha-bhakti* movement" indicates "under the aegis of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī."

* This accusation, echoing other parties' claim that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī did not pursue *rāga-bhakti,* is discussed elsewhere in this book, particularly in the section "On Rāgānuga-bhakti."

* Whenever Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī spoke of his *gurudeva,* his *guru-pāda-padma,* or similar, he was referring to Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī. Yet Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

was no less regarded by or influential upon him—for instance, as evidenced in his quoting Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura more than of any other *ācārya*.

† See vol. 2, p. 292.

‡ *Kalyāṇa-kalpataru, Upadeśa* 10. Herein Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura refers to the goddess Sarasvatī, an internal potency of Kṛṣṇa. By *vidvad-rūḍhi,* disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī have ascertained in this couplet an indication of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's vision of Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī as the manifestation of Sarasvatī.

§ For a description of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *mano-'bhīṣṭa,* see vol. 1, pp. 63–65. For in-depth analysis of how Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī fulfilled Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *mano-'bhīṣṭa,* see *Śrī Bhaktivinoda Mano-'bhīṣṭa o Śrīla Prabhupāda* (*Gauḍīya,* 20th year, 48–49).

* In this section, the text up to this point is from Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's preface to *Jaiva Dharma,* in which, particularly referring to the character of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, he elaborately analyzes these twenty-six qualities of a Vaiṣṇava. (See Cc 2.22.75 and 77–80)

* *Preyas*—dear; *śreyas*—superior, preferable. In this context, *preyas* is used to mean that which gives immediate benefit or pleasure, and *śreyas,* that which brings ultimate welfare.

* *Pūrva-rāga*—mutual attachment between Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* prior to their meeting.

* "Bhaktisiddhānta-viruddha o Rasābhāsa" is a slightly altered form of the first line of Cc 2.10.113 (fully quoted in vol. 1, p. xlvi).

* In his commentary to SB 1.1.8, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura echoed Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's definition of *snigdha,* ordinarily defined as "affection": "From his guru's words the disciple gains *adhokṣaja-jñāna* (knowledge of the Supreme Lord who is imperceivable to the mundane senses). The qualification to gain this knowledge is called *snigdhatā.*"

* The episode of the pretentious *brāhmaṇa,* who was severely beaten for imitating Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's ecstatic state, appears in Cb 1.16.199–229.

† See also the paragraph beginning "The theist is" (vol. 1, p. 144).

‡ See the text beginning "Humility implies perfect submission to the truth and no sympathy for untruth" (vol. 1, p. 145).

* *Krodha*—anger; *dveṣi*—hostile; *jane*—unto persons.

* Implied is that the real process for developing their own *bhajana* is preaching.

* For more on humility, see vol. 1, pp. 459–60, and vol. 2, pp. 257–59.

* The Gauḍīya *paramparā* after Śrī Caitanya was delineated by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in his *kīrtana* beginning *kṛṣṇa haite catura-mukha* as: Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, Śrī Rūpa, Śrī Sanātana; Śrī Jīva, Śrī Raghunātha; Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja; Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura; Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravatī Ṭhākura; Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa; Śrī Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī; Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura; Śrīla Gaura Kiśora; Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. Except for Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī, none of the above were connected by *dīkṣā.*

* This entry, from the *Harmonist* 26.3.53–54 (August 1928), paraphrases verses 9–10 of Jīva Gosvāmī's *Tattva-sandarbha*.

* The basic definition of an *ācārya* is given in *Vāyu Purāṇa:*

> *ācinoti yaḥ śāstrārtham ācāre sthāpayaty api*
> *svayam ācarate yasmād ācāryas tena kīrtitaḥ*
>
> An *ācārya* is one who fully understands the conclusions of the revealed scriptures and whose behavior reflects his deep realization. He is a living example, for he teaches the meaning of the scriptures by both word and deed.

Nevertheless, a fully liberated *ācārya* is not constricted by rules of scripture meant for regulating and uplifting those who have not realized the essence of *śāstra*. *Śāstra* is given by God, and the duty of an *ācārya* is to follow and transmit the message thereof. Yet in one sense, self-realized persons are more important than *śāstra* because they explain and fulfil its purpose by making its meaning understandable to eligible people. The statement "An *ācārya* can make *śāstra*" means that a fully God-realized emissary can introduce practical adjustments that may not be clearly mentioned in but serve the purpose of *śāstra*. As Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura wrote in his commentary on his own *Tattva-sūtra:*

> Devotees of the Supreme Lord are not controlled by scriptures, because their activities are harmonious with divine wisdom. Therefore when realized devotees ordain any new arrangement, it should be accepted as a religious code even if not found in the scriptural directions of previous sages.

See also *Nārada-bhakti-sūtra* 69: "Great pure devotees make scriptures authoritative."

† This reference to *smārtas* refers to their penchant for precise following of a plethora of scriptural rules without understanding the essential purpose thereof.

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda wrote: "When my guru-*mahārāja* Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda introduced this system [*pāñcārātrikī dīkṣā*] it was protested even by his inner circle of godbrothers or friends. Of course he had actually no godbrothers, but there were many disciples of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura who protested against this action of my guru-*mahārāja.* However, he did not care for it." (Letter, 14

November 1970)

* See Brs 1.4.15–16 (quoted in vol. 2, p. 171).

* The *śrāddha-pātra* is to be submitted to the most illustrious *brāhmaṇas.* According to *smārta-vicāra,* Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was of the lowest possible birth, yet Śrī Advaita Ācārya declared him more exalted than millions of nondevotee *brāhmaṇas.*

* *Haviṣya*—See vol. 2, p. 92, fn *.

* Extracted from a lecture on 7 February 1969 (the *āvirbhāva-tithi* of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura) and from a lecture of 16 October 1972. Research has revealed nothing more about this incident.

† Those questions are reproduced in vol. 3, pp. 153–55.

* These figures are based on estimates given by various disciples. Śrī B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja stated that the total number of disciples was merely two thousand to three thousand, but this probably referred only to *dīkṣā* disciples. In the *Harmonist* 33.4.94 (24 December 1936) it was stated that the number of inmates residing throughout the Gauḍīya Maṭha branches was "several hundred."

† Kṛṣṇa-kānti Prabhu was originally from East Bengal. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura told him to stay at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha and be a doctor of souls, which he did throughout his life. Later, as Śrī Bhakti Kusuma Śramaṇa Mahārāja, he became the institutional *ācārya* thereat.

‡ As per tradition, newcomers did not start chanting the *mahā-mantra* on beads until formally awarded *harināma* (which differs from current ISKCON practice). The number of rounds to be chanted varied among different devotees. This is discussed in vol. 1, p. 255.

* Although apparently this was a violation of *śāstra,* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was quite capable of ascertaining the eligibility of a candidate even without testing him, as is apparent from his comments about the *brahmacārīs* Rādhā-ramaṇa, Nitāi, and Hari Kṛṣṇa given at the end of this section. By his exceptional insight, he was able to fulfil the purpose of the *śāstrīya* rule even without following it verbatim.

* Sarojavāsinī-devī dāsī is also mentioned in vol. 2, p. 339.

* "Daṇḍapāṇi Dolāi" seems not to have been this devotee's initiated name.

† *Loka*—person, people.

‡ Vāsudeva Rāmānuja dāsa—See vol. 2, p. 68.

* After the departure of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, Rādhā Ramaṇa Prabhu accepted *sannyāsa* and

was named Bhakti Kumuda Santa Mahārāja.

* *Adhikārī*—"one fit to be" or "one entitled to." Thus *dāsādhikārī* indicates a person both fit and entitled to serve the Lord. Adhikārī was also a surname for a *brāhmaṇa* caste of Vaiṣṇava gurus.

† SB 7.12.1 states:

> *brahmacārī gurukule vasan dānto guror hitam*
> *ācaran dāsavan nīco gurau sudṛḍha-sauhṛdaḥ*
>
> A *brahmacārī* should practice completely controlling his senses. He should be submissive and have an attitude of firm friendship for the guru. With a great vow, a *brahmacārī* should live in a *gurukula* (ashram of the guru) only for the guru's benefit.

‡ Vrajavāsī was also a surname for a *brāhmaṇa* caste of Vaiṣṇava gurus.

§ *Dādā*—elder brother.

Despite this instruction by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, it appears that *babu* and *-dā* were still used within the Gauḍīya Maṭha, even sometimes by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī himself.

* Examples of this ancient tradition from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam:* Nārada Muni addresses as *prabhu* his disciples Vyāsa (SB 1.5.4) and Dhruva (SB 4.8.69), and Śukadeva Gosvāmī similarly addresses Parīkṣit Mahārāja (SB 10.33.32, 56.11).

* Eleven devotees were designated as Mahopadeśaka, among whom one, Aprākṛta Bhakti Sāraṅga Prabhu, was later designated as Mahā-mahopadeśaka. Among thirteen devotees designated as Upadeśaka, the three *brahmacārīs* Hayagrīva, Praṇavānanda, and Siddha-svarūpa were later designated as Mahopadeśaka.

* In Sanskrit, Bengali, and many other languages throughout the world, modes of address and grammar vary according to relationships between persons. The Bengali word *āpni* is the respectful form for *you* and would practically never be used by a superior to a junior. *Tu m i* indicates familiarity with or social inferiority of the person being spoken to, often implying intimacy and affection on the part of the speaker, and thus is appropriate for a guru in addressing his disciple. Paramānanda Prabhu, Vinoda Bihārī Prabhu, and Narahari Prabhu were *śiṣyas* whom Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura addressed as *tumi.*

* See also his comparing at least some of them to direct associates of Mahāprabhu (vol. 1, p. 205).

* See also "Assuming the Responsibility of Being Guru" (vol. 3, pp. 63–66).

* For a comparison of mundane parental love to that of the genuine spiritual affection offered by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, see the verse beginning *vātsalyam* (vol. 3, p. 181).

* He also arranged stipends for some married *maṭha-vāsīs.* (See vol. 2, p. 286)

* The printing in *Nadia Prakash* of one such glorification of Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu was stopped by Vāsudeva Prabhu himself, by exerting his influence within the publication department.

* According to Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava teachings, to approach Lord Caitanya one must first be favored by the all-merciful Lord Nityānanda. Being the last disciple of Nityānanda Prabhu, Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura was particularly dear to Him, just as the youngest son is especially dear to the father. Even today, recalcitrant *maṭha-vāsīs* of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha are exiled in Māmgāchi.

* This referred to the manifestation of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa, service to whom Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had revealed in Māyāpur.

* For more on the rationale of the Gauḍīya Maṭha stance on welfare, see "The Gauḍīya Maṭha: Its Message and Activities" (vol. 3, pp. 37–48).

† See also the letter to "Paramahaṁsa" (vol. 2, pp. 330–32).

* This, the previous narration, and that of Mitra (see vol. 1, pp. 41–42) are all similar and probably refer to the same person.

* Yamadūtas—messengers of the regent of death. This anecdote was briefly mentioned in the *Nadia Prakash* and has been retold in various ways.

* See SB 7.5.30 (cited in vol. 1, p. 285).

† In Gv 1.153–54 is stated, "The servant of the wife is never a real householder."

* These four items are essential to Kṛṣṇa's Vraja-*līlā.*

† Goloka-*darśana, jagad-darśana*—See vol. 1, pp. 173–74.

* As per the injunction in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.5.13), *vyavāyaḥ prajayā na ratyā:* "Religious sex life is permitted, but only in marriage for begetting children, and not for sensuous pleasure."

† *Sandhinī-śakti*—the existential feature of Kṛṣṇa's internal potency that maintains and manifests the spiritual world in all its diversity. For instance, the Lord's servants and maidservants, His consorts, His father and mother, and everything else in the spiritual world are manifestations of the *sandhinī-śakti.*

* See vol. 1, p. 428, fn *, and the relevant verse in vol. 2, p. 198.

* "Chewing the chewed"—See the verse beginning *matir na kṛṣṇe* (vol. 1, p. 285).

* Since all of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's direct siblings died young, presumably this "aunt" of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's was a cousin of his father or a similar close relative.

* See Rādhā-Govinda dāsa Bābājī (vol. 2, pp. 323–24).

† In Vedic culture, a man who formally renounces the world for spiritual uplift is considered civilly dead, and his wife a widow.

* *Ātma-nivedana*—self-surrender. The nine islands envisaged to constitute Navadvīpa correspond to the nine principle processes of *bhakti;* Antardvīpa, the island wherein Māyāpur is situated, represents the ultimate principal, namely self-surrender.

† *Kāma-gāyatrī* and *kāma-bīja*—esoteric mantras for worship of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana.

* This chant is rendered as it appears in *Sarasvatī-jayaśrī,* p. 200. It is usually understood to have been introduced by Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī, and there are several slightly varied versions extant. Similar to the above, the *Gauḍīya* (10.324) gave the mantra as *jaya jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda jayādvaita śrī-gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda,* and in *Gauḍīya* 3.30.2 it appears in the same form sans the first *jaya.* The present standard form is *śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu nityānanda śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda.*

* Guru-mantra, guru-*gāyatrī,* Gaura-mantra, and Gaurāṅga-*gāyatrī*—*Pāñcarātrika* mantras for worshiping guru and Gaurāṅga.

† *Pradīpa*—a lamp.

* Bhakti Ratna Ṭhākura is further described in vol. 2, pp. 356–57.

* Jati Śekhara Prabhu never again heard Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī call Bhāratī Mahārāja by his *sannyāsa* name, but only as "Auli-rāṇī sannyasi."

* *Bātāsā*—a type of sweet made wholly of sugar.

* Ranchi is now the capital of Jharkhand state.

* "Bon" is the Bengali pronunciation of the Sanskrit word *vana.*

* After Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's passing, Bon Mahārāja repented having fallen out with him. For several years, he undertook severe penance by way of atonement for offenses that he considered he had made at his guru's lotus feet.

* Bhakti Vilāsa Ṭhākura is described in vol. 2, pp. 410–12.

† It appears that the Prapannāśrama previously founded in Āmalājoḍā by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had deteriorated.

* The excursion to Burma resulted in a Maṭha being established in Rangoon in 1935. However, due to political turmoil, the outpost was soon closed.

† *Jācak* is the Bengali pronunciation of the Sanskrit word *yācaka* (suppliant).

* *Jājābar* is the Bengali pronunciation of the Sanskrit word *yāyāvara* (wandering mendicant).

† Śrīmad Bhakti Svarūpa Purī, one of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's earlier sannyasi disciples, fell from his vows. His wife dragged him away in the very presence of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, who tearfully lamented his inability to save that soul. According to Jati Śekhara Prabhu, this sannyasi adopted Christianity to cover his falldown. Yet he eventually returned to the Mission and was reinstated as a sannyasi by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, who gave him a new *sannyāsa* name (apparently, Śrīmad Bhakti Vilāsa Parvata). Although such reinstatement was unprecedented in the history of *sannyāsa,* it proved successful, for thenceforth that sannyasi rigidly maintained his vows.

* *Kapaṭa*—cheating. (See also *kapaṭa mānuṣa* in SB 1.1.20)

* *Śrī-nṛsiṁha-mantra-rāja*—a mantra (now widely circulated in print) meant to be given secretly by a guru to his disciples.

* The following profiles are listed in order of the date (estimated if unknown) on which each disciple received *harināma.*

* This instruction to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura echoes that given at the time of his initiation. (See vol. 1, p. 30)

* *Vātsalya-rasa*—Since in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theology *vātsalya-rasa* refers to transcendental loving exchanges between Kṛṣṇa and His sons or parents, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's usage in this context is certainly sarcastic.

* "With one eye" suggests that confirmation was given with reservations.

* These brothers, and their eventual enmity toward Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī, are also mentioned in vol. 1, p. 59.

† See vol. 1, p. 57.

* Kuñjadā—"elder brother Kuñja," the commonly used and respectful sobriquet for Kuñja Bihārī.

† *Methara* (Bengali)—an outcast, of the social group whose perennial occupation has been to clean toilets and drains. For a caste Hindu, or even an outcast of a different subset, to perform this task was so unthinkably demeaning that it would have been almost impossible to hire anyone other than a *methara* to do it. Therefore Kuñja Bihārī's willingness to do it indicated his having transcended mundane social consciousness.

* "These activities" may be inferred to denote both those begun by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura on the earthly plane, mentioned in this excerpt, and those in the spiritual world, related in another portion of this letter. (See vol. 1, p. 461)

* Sevā-kuñja is one of the most confidential pastime places of Vraja, wherein Kṛṣṇa serves Rādhā by combing Her hair, tying Her tresses, etc. Several of the main Gauḍīya temples of Vraja were established by first-generation followers of Śrīman Mahāprabhu of this area. *Kuñja-sevā* (performing service in a bower of Vṛndāvana) is the exalted aspiration of devotees in *mañjarī-bhāva.* That *kuñja-sevā* can be attained only by service to the most exalted *gopīs* is indicated in Cc 2.8.204–5.

† *Guru-devatātmā*—one who sees his guru as his lord and very soul (SB 11.2.37). *Yathā deve tathā gurau,* from *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (6.23), refers to having equal devotion to God and guru.

* See vol. 1, p. 461.

† Pramoda Bihārī—See "Śrīmad Bhakti Kevala Auḍulomi Mahārāja" (vol. 2, pp. 316–18).

* Such techniques may appear harsh, but were prevalent in those days. Nowadays in India even more extreme measures are common, such disputes often leading to murder.

* 1912 Kashimbazar *darśana*—See vol. 1, pp. 49–52.

† This was the first of many times that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would ask Vāsudeva Prabhu to sing.

* Until today, these *praṇāma-mantras* (see vol. 1, pp. xiv–xv) have remained standard within most of the Gauḍīya Maṭha diaspora and also within ISKCON. That the *praṇāma-mantra* for Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura (*namo bhaktivinodāya... rūpānuga-varāya te*) was composed by Vāsudeva Prabhu when quite young, before he accepted *dīkṣā,* is clear from its being featured in *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 18.524 (March 1916). It is not known when the mantras for Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī and Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī were composed.

† *Aṣṭottara-śata-śrī*—adorned with 108 transcendental opulences. *Om*—invocation of the Absolute Truth; *viṣṇupāda*—one who is of the same status as Viṣṇu, or situated at His feet. *Cit*—the aspect of Kṛṣṇa's internal energy that reveals knowledge; *vilāsa*—(one who takes part in) pastimes.

The term *aṣṭottara-śata-śrī* in praise of exceptional *ācāryas* had been in vogue in the Śrī and Mādhva *sampradāyas* since time immemorial. Stating *om viṣṇupāda* was as directed in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* (1.95). *Aṣṭottara-śata-śrī* and *om viṣṇupāda* gained wide and permanent usage; *cid-vilāsa* not so.

* The appellation *sevā-vigraha* is accorded to Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu in Cb 1.2.5.

* The later history of Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu is unusual and fraught with controversy. After Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's demise, Ananta Vāsudeva was appointed *ācārya* of the Gauḍīya Mission and took *sannyāsa,* with the name Śrīmad Bhakti Prasāda (B.P.) Purī Gosvāmī. But amid the ensuing infighting, he gave up *sannyāsa,* married, and abdicated as head of the Mission. It was widely reported that he also rejected some teachings and practices imparted by his guru—for instance, stating that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's introducing of *sannyāsa* was not according to *śāstra,* and disagreeing with his conception of *paramparā.* From certain of Ananta Vāsudeva's statements it became clear that he considered Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura not a *nitya-siddha.* Thus Ananta Vāsudeva was rejected by most of his godbrothers and many of his disciples. Further horrendous accusations were leveled at him, which he never cared to rebut (nor were they ever proven). Later he lived almost incognito in Vṛndāvana, where he salvaged and published ancient Vaiṣṇava manuscripts, particularly those of the Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana—a project that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had wanted executed. Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu departed this world from Vṛndāvana, and although to many his name is indelibly associated with ignominy, to this day others worship him as a misunderstood and misrepresented saint.

* *Praṇipāta, paripraśna,* and *sevā* are the three conditions enjoined for approaching a guru, as described in Bg 4.34.

* This preservation of Bhaktisiddhānta-*vāṇī* in the *Gauḍīya* renders these magazines incalculably valuable even today, and for as long as they remain extant.

* In 1939 Sundarānanda Prabhu rewrote *Śrī Caitanyadeva* and expanded it to more than five hundred pages.

† In the era after Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's departure, most of his followers rejected Sundarānanda as heretical for subscribing to Ananta Vāsudeva's rejecting Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's teachings. Several of Sundarānanda's later writings are similarly considered profanely unorthodox. Yet however one views his later trajectory, Sundarānanda's earlier literary contribution to the Sārasvata-*sampradāya* is undeniably enormous and lasting.

* *Kaṇṭhahāra*—necklace.

* *Sera*—approximately two pounds.

† The Beadon Street post office is a branch in Calcutta. Although Ananta Viśvambhara

Prabhu's behavior seems illaudable, this account is as told by him to the author.

* In rural Bengal such bridges are especially common during the monsoon, when many new rivulets flow through the fields. Wet bamboo can be precariously slippery.

† Normally a disciple is careful to touch gently even the feet of his guru, what to speak of giving him a bear hug. This incident is an example of overstepping a norm of etiquette for the sake of rendering service in an extraordinary circumstance.

* Cowries were formerly used in India as minor units of currency. (*Tin*—three; *kaḍi*— cowrie)

* *Pūrvāśrama*—previous *āśrama.* In this context, it refers to Praṇavānanda's secular life.

† Date molasses is profusely produced in Jessore District, where it is also a great favorite.

* *Mā!*—"Mother!" a common Bengali interjection.

* Ravenshaw College was named after the district collector for that area, an Englishman who was highly appreciative of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and had assisted him in apprehending the rascal yogi Biṣakiṣana.

* *Sudhākara*—mine, or receptacle, of nectar; moon.

† In Indian tradition a woman's ornaments are made of precious metals and gems, meant to enhance her husband's pleasure in seeing her and to further serve as an investment of family wealth. A wife is also meant to follow her husband, which the wife of Śrī Bhakti Sudhākara did by offering all her wealth to their guru, thus demonstrating their spirit of full surrender to and dependence upon him. Her cryptic statement "Whom these are meant for is here" can be understood as referring either to her husband, who spent little time at home and much at the Maṭha, or to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

* The booklet *Mahā-mahopadeśaka Śrīla Bhakti Sudhākara* (edited by Sundarānanda Prabhu and published in 1940, shortly after Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu's demise) states that the English translation of chapter five of *Brahma-saṁhitā,* ascribed to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, was actually rendered by Bhakti Sudhākara Prabhu in collaboration with B.P. Tīrtha Mahārāja.

* Śrīdhara Mahārāja later commented, "Sometimes I think that that sort of humility is dangerous, because one's life is the valuable property of his guru-*mahārāja.*"

* It appears that this contribution was supplemental to his regular monthly donation.

† As already noted, Śrīpāda Bhakti Kevala Auḍulomi Mahārāja and Śrīpāda Vinoda Bihārī Brahmacārī also hailed from Banaripara.

* In Katwa, about twenty-five miles northwest of Māyāpur, a temple of Lord Caitanya marks

the place where He took *sannyāsa.*

* Keṣṭo-Biṣṭu—colloquial names for Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu, spoken disparagingly by Dr. Raman.

* The term "volcanic energy" was used by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in connection with other devotees also.

* This anecdote is described in vol. 2, p. 148.

* Although never formally inducted as a *bābājī,* he accepted that dress and lifestyle and became known as Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī (or, to ISKCON members, Akiñcana Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī).

† His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda stated: "One of my godbrothers narrated his life history, that he was distilling wine for drinking. And he said that all kinds of intoxicants he has passed. He was a graduate of all kinds of intoxication. But when he came to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura he left everything. He was not even smoking a bidi." (Lecture, 25 November 1968).

This probably refers to Trailokyanātha Rāya, even though it contradicts Jati Śekhara Prabhu's version that his father did not drink alcohol.

* This visit was during the tour heading toward South India. (See vol. 1, p. 237)

* According to *śāstra* and tradition, the *tilaka* markings specific to a *sampradāya* are to be applied to one's body only after being formally inducted by a guru of that *sampradāya*.

† *Khādi*—a kind of cloth. (See vol. 2, p. 72)

‡ Unfortunately that poem was lost.

* At that time bicycles were a special commodity, imported from Britain.

† *Methara*—See vol. 2, p. 334, fn †.

* *Gulābjāmun*—a succulent, round sweet made of *panir* (fresh curds) and flour, deep-fried in ghee and soaked in sugar syrup flavored with rosewater.

* This account was told first-hand by O.B.L. Kapoor to the author.

† After the departure of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, Dr. Kapoor became closely associated with the Nitāi-Gaura–Rādhe-Śyāma *apa-sampradāya.*

* A fame that continues to this day.

* Unless otherwise stated, all material in this section is as told by Jati Śekhara Prabhu. When

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda was staying in Bhubaneswar in January 1977, he sent a devotee to Cuttack to bring Jati Śekhara Prabhu to see him. He embraced Jati Śekhara Prabhu and said, "Do you remember me? Are you well? I am thinking of you," and inquired about his family situation.

Chapters three and four of volume one of *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta* contain more anecdotes of interactions between this exceptional disciple and his exceptional guru.

* See also *Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta* (end of 6.4) for a similar explanation of this point by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

* This incident is related in more detail in "How Shall I Serve You?" chapter four of *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta.* The statement therein that it took place on the bank of Rādhā-kuṇḍa is an error.

* See vol. 2, p. 332.

* Latikā Mañjarī devī, the wife of Bhakti Vijaya Prabhu's first son, and a disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, related how one day late in 1936 while she was cooking, she overheard Bhakti Vijaya Prabhu relate to his wife that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had appeared to him in a dream and ordered him to charter a special train from Shealdah to Krishnanagar on a certain day and purchase large quantities of salt (as required for placing the body of a *paramahaṁsa* in *samādhi*), and gave other details regarding where and how his *samādhi* should be placed, etc. Although this account can no longer be verified, it is certainly credible, for it is unlikely that the special train that transported Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's divine form could have been chartered unless arranged well in advance.

* Walther Eidlitz, *Krsna-Caitanya: Sein Leben Und Seine Lehre,* Stockholm Studies in Comparative Religion, vol. 7. (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1968). Although there is no known reference to Sadānanda Prabhu's receiving *dīkṣā* from Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, quite possibly he did.

For a short autobiographical sketch see www.sadananda.com.

† "Corbluth" is transposed from the Bengali rendition of the original name and hence may not be the correct spelling.

‡ Although knowledgeable followers whom the author consulted concurred that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had as many as seven foreign disciples, the names of others are not known. Vinoda-vāṇī dāsī (Miss Celia Bowtell), from London, is often cited as a disciple, but from a letter of hers dated 7 February 1937 and featured in the *Gauḍīya* (15.494), it appears that she received *harināma* after that date, i.e., after the disappearance of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. In a *Nadia Prakash* report about preaching in London, some persons with Vaiṣṇava names are mentioned, which suggests that they were disciples.

* Madhusūdana Sharma was previously mentioned in vol. 1, p. 298.

* Śrī Gopāla Praharārāja is also mentioned in vol. 2, p. 383.

* *Hare murāre madhu-kaiṭabhāre*—the first words of a common verse that consists of names of Kṛṣṇa with a supplication for protection. The complete verse is:

> *hare murāre madhu-kaiṭabhāre, gopāla govinda mukunda śaure*
> *yajñeśa nārāyaṇa kṛṣṇa viṣṇo, virāśrayaṁ māṁ jagadīśa rakṣa*

Quoting this verse in the introduction to his *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā,* Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes: "These are the holy names for deliverance in Dvāpara-yuga. The names mentioned in this verse aim toward Kṛṣṇa, the shelter of unsheltered persons. In this stage there is a prominence of *śānta-, dāsya-, sakhya-,* and *vātsalya-rasas.*"

It is not clear whether Acyuta would chant only *hare kṛṣṇa, hare kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa, hare hare* and *hare murāre madhu-kaiṭabhāre,* or the full mantras that they are part of.

* Several slightly different versions of this incident have been published. This is from an original account by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura published in *Sajjana-toṣaṇī.*

* "My *prabhu*" refers to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

† For more information, see *Vaṁśīdāsa Bābājī,* by Bhakti Vikāsa Swami.

* *Kṣetra-sannyāsa*—leaving household life to reside, with or without one's wife, in a place of pilgrimage devoted to Lord Viṣṇu. It is often observed with a vow to never go beyond the border of the holy place.

* *Svarṇa*—gold; *didi*—elder sister. "Svarṇa Didi" is a typical nickname for Bengali women, whose actual name was not to be spoken. Thus, a woman's actual name would remain largely unknown and forgotten (as apparently happened in this case).

* On at least one occasion, quoting Cb 3.4.126 (*pṛthivīte... sarvatra pracāra haibe*), Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura referred to Lord Caitanya's *mano-'bhīṣṭa* as preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world. (Śrī Śrī Sarasvatī Saṁlāpa [Allahabad], 130) For another explanation of Lord Caitanya's *mano-'bhīṣṭa* and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's revelation of it, see vol. 2, p. 170.

As stated in the *Gauḍīya* (14.446), Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura yet further elucidated (on the basis of Cc 3.1.218–19 and 3.4.218) Lord Caitanya's *mano-'bhīṣṭa* as: compiling and propagating *bhakti-śāstra,* rediscovering and revealing lost holy places, and installing deities for worship.

The unity of these various explanations may be deduced from the verse beginning *anarpita-carīṁ cirāt* (Cc 1.1.4).

* This translation with intertwined commentary is by B.R. Śrīdhara himself, who further commented, “Although externally he was like a lion, internally he was amazingly tender and sweet. But one could feel it only by communion with the inner beauty of his personality. Externally, his worship of the path of love was full of opulence and reverence, but in reality he was worshiping the simple beauty of Vṛndāvana-*bhakti.* And with his fearful image of a lion, he established Vraja-*bhakti's* absolute dominance in this world. After his disappearance I described his life in one verse. If he were here now, I think he would say, ‘Śrīdhara Mahārāja has captured me in a poetic prison.’”

† According to a commonly related anecdote, when His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda was asked about his guru he replied, “What can I say? He was a Vaikuṇṭha man.”

The twenty-six qualities are listed in Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's description of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. (See vol. 2, p. 213)

* See “Is Gauḍīya Maṭha the Only Way?” (vol. 3, pp. 49–52).

* See vol. 1, p. 184, and vol. 2, p. 219.

† Apparently Bābājī Mahārāja had a few householder disciples in Agartala, Tripura. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī might have presented himself as the sole *śiṣya* to distinguish himself from the several hangers-on who merely posed as disciples; or because among those who remained faithful in their vows, he was the only one who spent significant time in being personally trained by Bābājī Mahārāja; or perhaps to intimate that only he could fully represent Bābājī Mahārāja.

* *Goloka-darśana* versus *jagad-darśana*—See vol. 1, pp. 173–74.

† That grief is described in vol. 2, pp. 209–210.

* See vol. 1, p. 186.

* It is not within the scope of this book to exactingly repeat replies to these hackneyed accusations, although summaries of several rebuttals presented by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura are included herein. For more detailed rebuttals see, for instance, *Spiritual Successors of the Six Gosvāmīs,* cited in the bibliography.

* Jati Śekhara Prabhu told me, “My guru was like a lion, your guru was like a lion, and you too should be like a lion.” May my seniors bless me to be a worthy representative of the “lion *paramparā.*”

* For the *śloka* defining this, see vol. 1, p. 283.

* *Āśraya* and *viṣaya* are terms adopted from *vyākaraṇa-śāstra,* or grammar. The aspect of Sanskrit grammar that deals with the syntactical relationships within a sentence (*kāraka*) describes that the locative case is of two types, *āśraya-saptamī* and *viṣaya-saptamī,* meaning respectively that the location is either (depending upon context) the shelter for the doer or object, or their destination. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī employed these terms in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* to describe the dynamics of *rasa.* It appears that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura introduced the terms *āśraya-vigraha* and *viṣaya-vigraha.*

* Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī superficially belonged to this subcaste. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda wrote: "The *kāyastha* class of Bengal is regarded all over India as *śūdras.* It is said that the Bengali *kāyasthas* were originally engaged as servants of *brāhmaṇas* who came from North India to Bengal. Later, the clerical class became the *kāyasthas* in Bengal. Now there are many mixed classes known as *kāyasthas.* Sometimes it is said in Bengal that those who cannot claim any particular class belong to the *kāyastha* class. Although these *kāyasthas* are considered *śūdras,* they are very intelligent and highly educated. Most of them are professionals, such as lawyers or politicians." (Cc 2.7.63, purport)

* This fourth definition (although not employed within the context of this book) is an important usage.

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In subentries, the name Bhaktisiddhānta is usually abbreviated as BST but is alphabetized as if spelled out. Similarly, Gauḍīya Maṭha is abbreviated in subentries as GM yet alphabetized as if spelled out. Honorifics have not been included in proper names.

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F | G | H | I | J
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Places Visited by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

Locations are approximate. Asterisks indicate places visited but not mentioned in this book. Toponyms are according to standard usage circa 1930.

The present border of Bangladesh and partial borders of Pakistan are shown. A more detailed map of Bengal is depicted opposite.

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Jammu
Lahore
Amritsar
Mussourie*
Dehradun*
Badrināth a*
Haridvāra
Multan
Kurukṣetra
Thaneśvara
Bijnor
Śukatal
Delhi
Muradabad
Sambhal
Vṛndāvana
Mathurā
Jaypur
Naimiṣāraṇya
Pushkar
Ajmer
Chitor*
Lucknow
Ayodhyā
Cawnpore
Faizabad
Darjeeling
Gauhati
Shillong
Prayāga/Allahabad
Banaras
Patna
Nathdvar
Gaya
Sylhet
Kānāi Nāṭaśālā
Dhanbad
Dacca
Mandar
Agartala
Ujjain
Jamshedpur
Dvāraka
Porbandar
Calcutta
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Khandwa*
Remuna
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Prabhas
Balasore
Jajpur
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Alarnath
Purī
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Coimbatore
Kumbhakonam
Trichinopoly
Madurai
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Bengal

The present borders of Bangladesh and West Bengal are shown.

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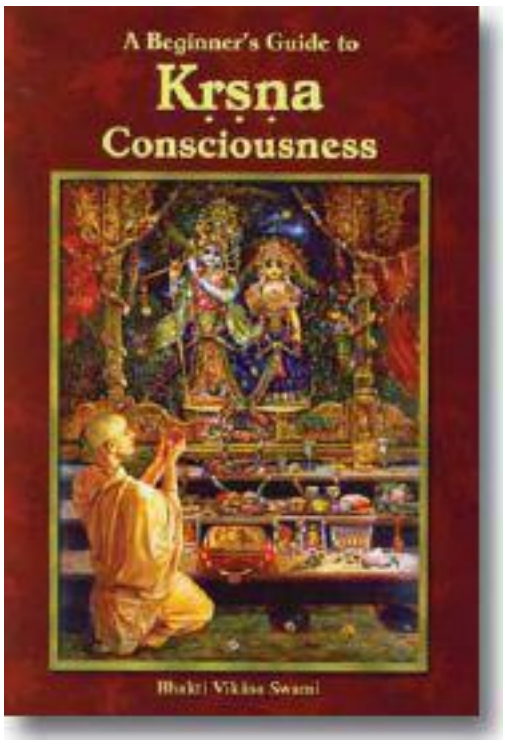

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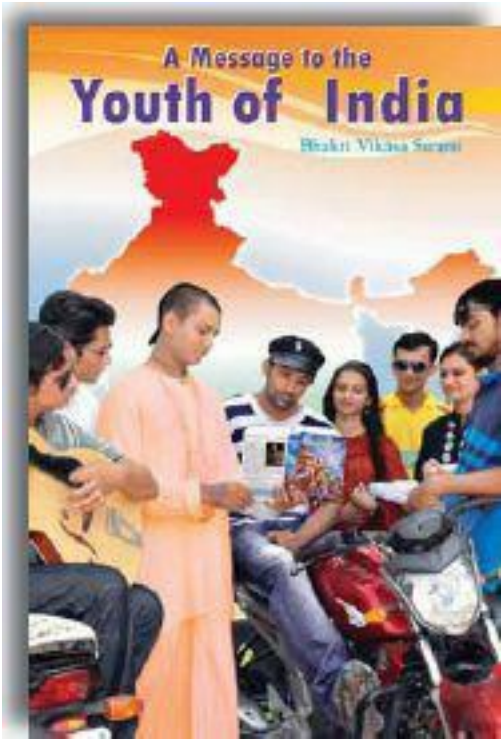

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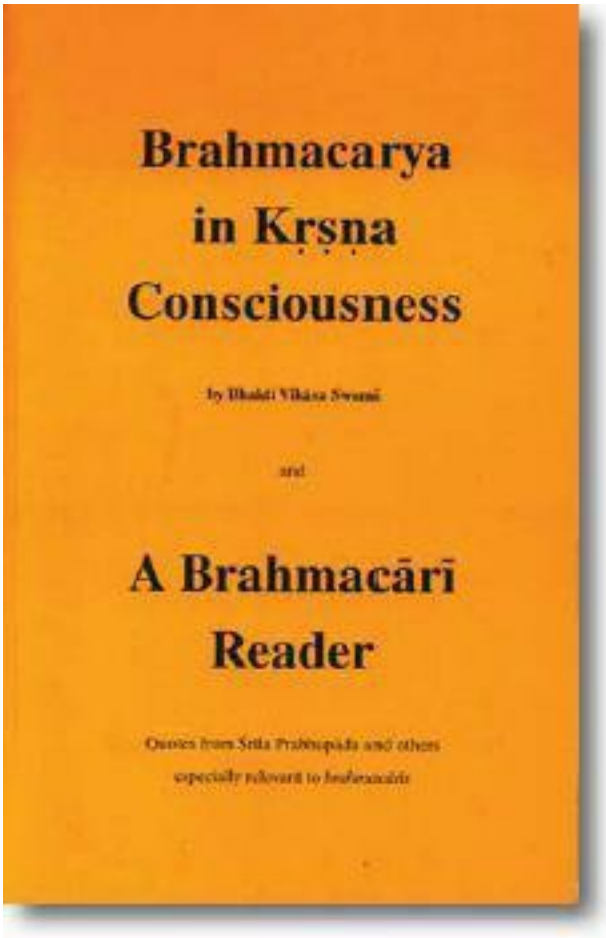

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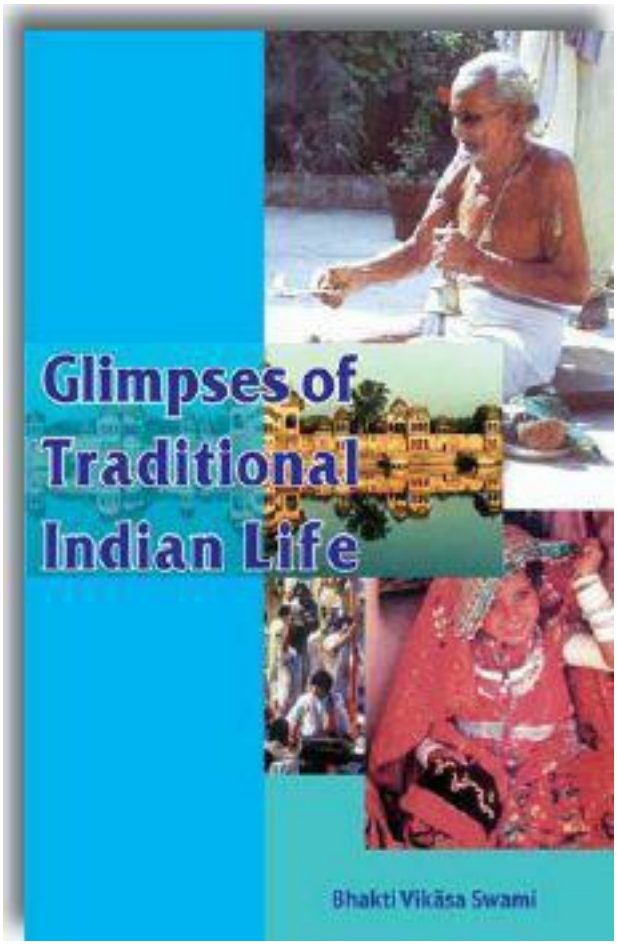

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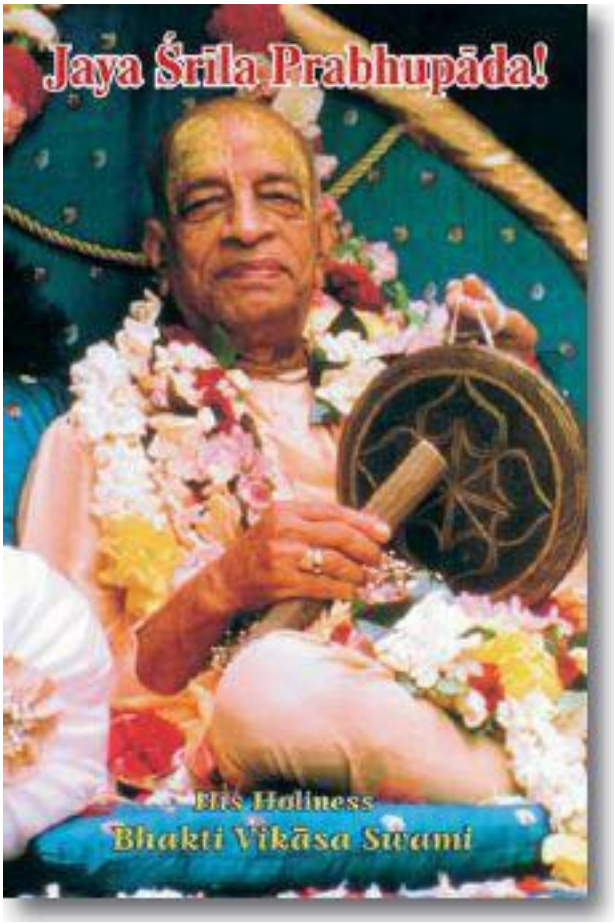

There is no limit to Śrīla Prabhupāda's transcendental attributes—nor do we wish to ever stop describing them. His qualities, combined with his achievements, undoubtedly establish Śrīla Prabhupāda as an extraordinarily great transcendental personality.

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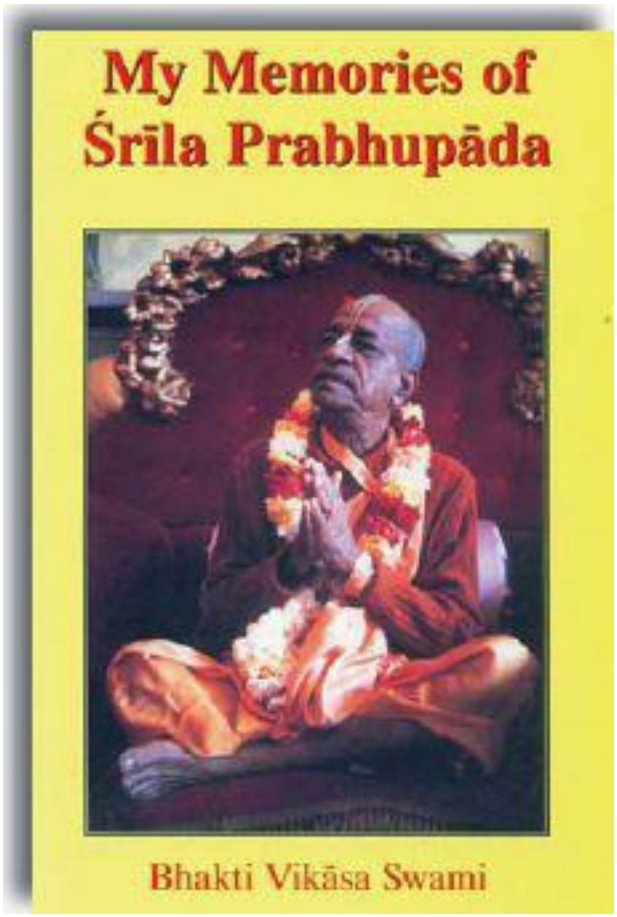

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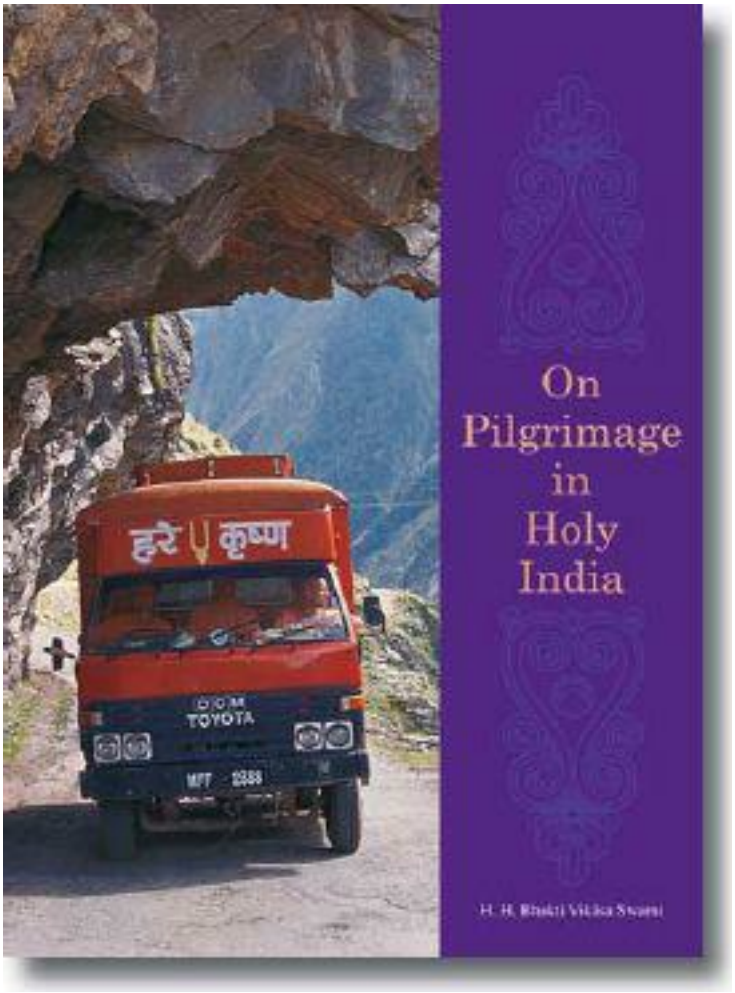

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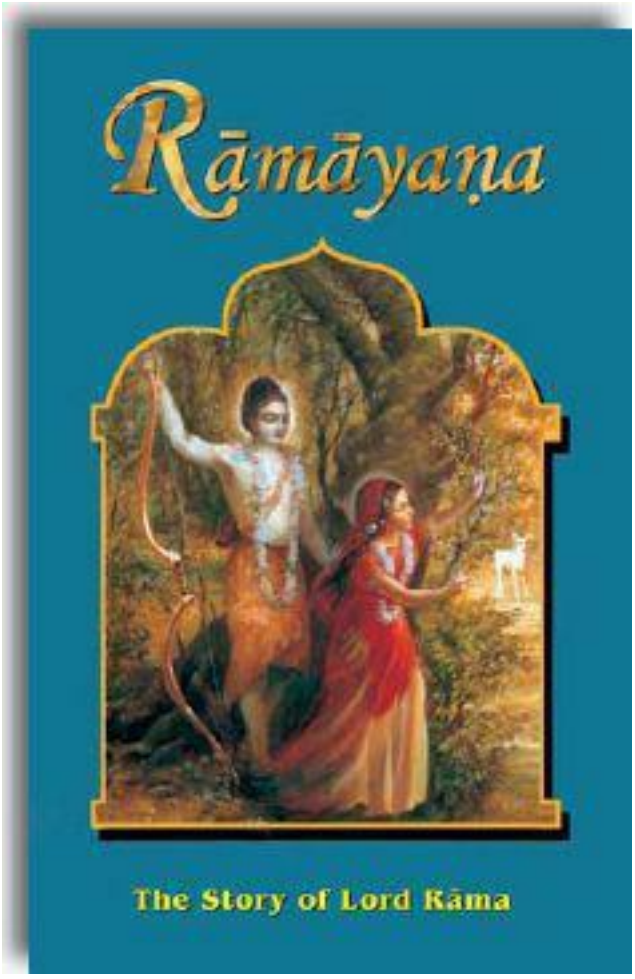

Countless eons ago, when men and animals could converse together and powerful *brāhmaṇas* would effect miracles, the uncontrollable demon Rāvaṇa was terrorizing the universe. The *Rāmāyaṇa* records the adventures of Rāma—the Lord of righteousness—as He struggles to overcome the forces of Rāvaṇa. This absorbing narration has delighted and enlightened countless generations in India, and its timeless spiritual insights are compellingly relevant in today's confused world.

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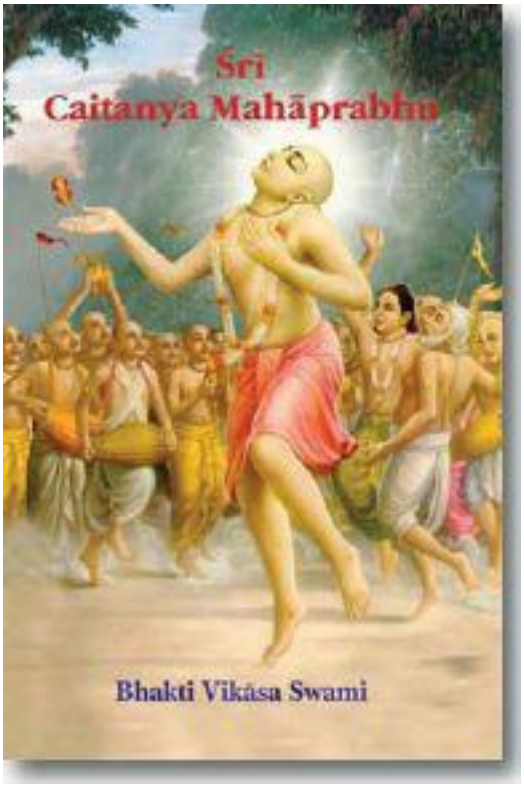

Hundreds of thousands of people throughout the world now follow the spotless path of Kṛṣṇa consciousness as given by Lord Caitanya. Chanting the holy names of Kṛṣṇa and dancing in ecstasy, they desire only love of Kṛṣṇa and consider material enjoyment to be insignificant. This book gives an overview of the life and teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the most munificent avatar of God ever to grace this planet.

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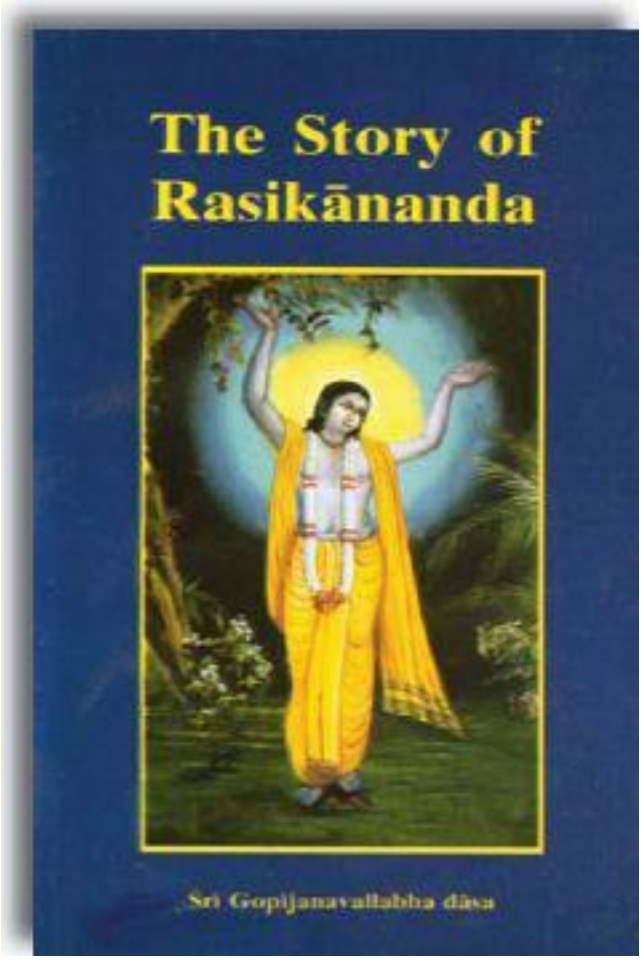

Śrī Rasikānanda-deva was a mighty Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* of the era just after Lord Caitanya's disappearance. Along with his guru, Śrīla Śyāmānanda Paṇḍita, he inundated North Orissa and neighboring districts in waves of Kṛṣṇa-*prema,* which are still flowing today. He subdued and converted atheists, blasphemers, and dacoits—and even tamed and initiated a rogue elephant!

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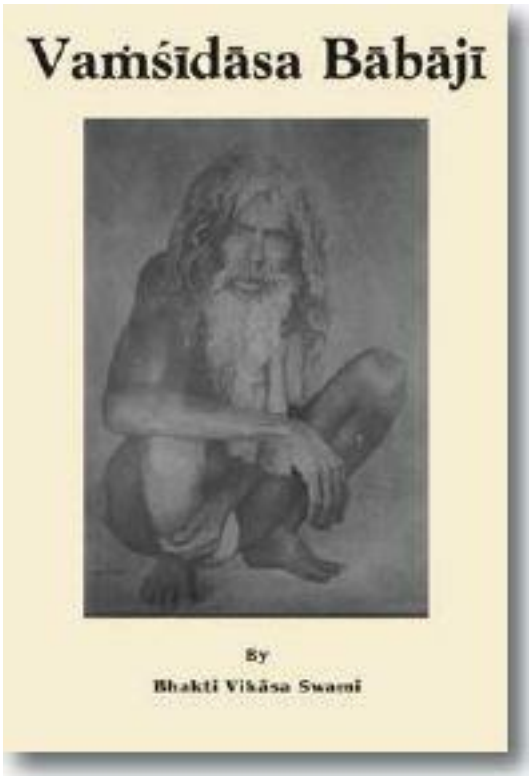

Śrīla Vaṁsīdāsa Bābājī was a great Vaiṣṇava who lived in Navadvīpa during the first half of the twentieth century. His behavior was so unusual that in any culture less spiritually enlightened than India's he almost certainly would have been considered crazy. Although physically present in this world, he had little communication with it. He was about six feet tall and strongly built. His hair and beard were uncut, matted, and dishevelled. He almost never bathed, and his eyes looked wild. He wore only a loin cloth, and nothing more.

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(Supplementary)

by Bhakti Vikāsa Swami

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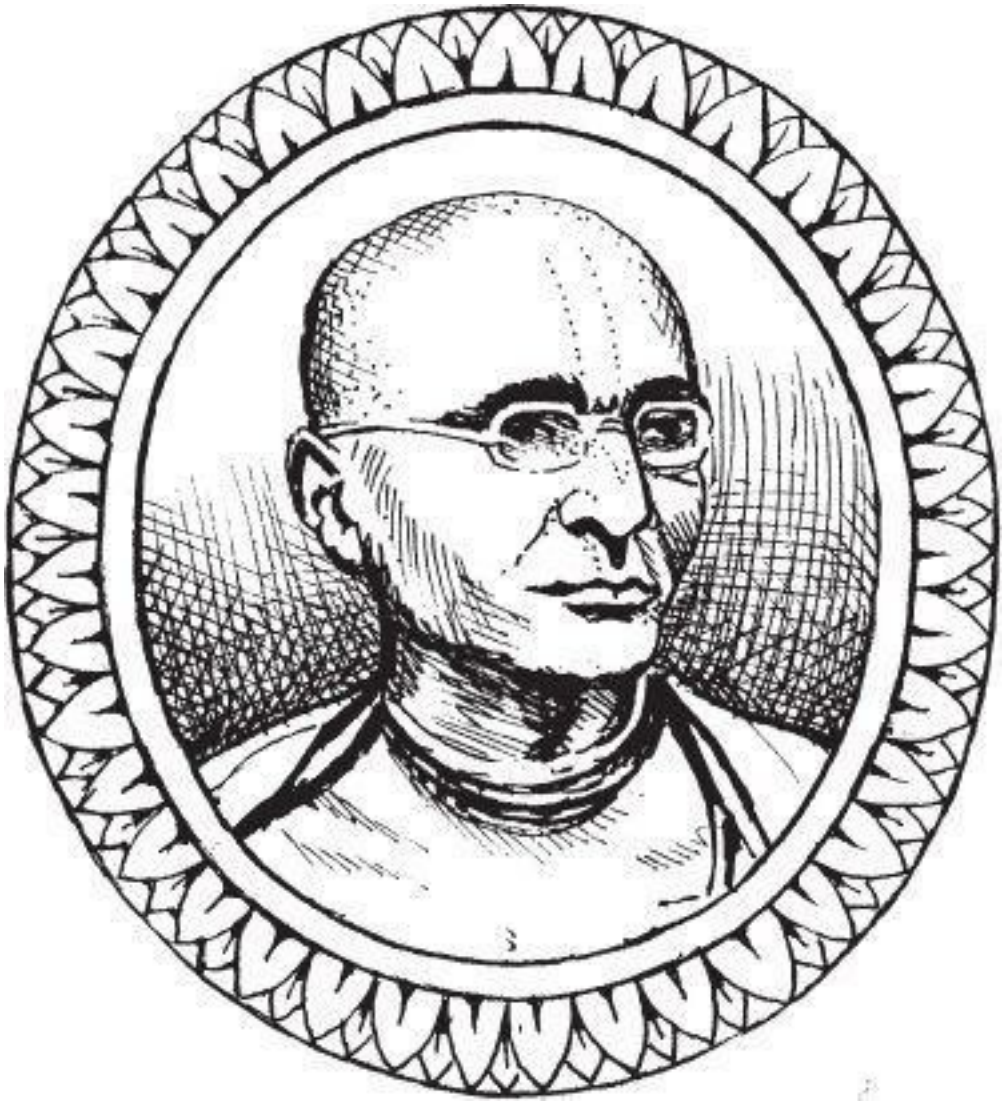

If to carry out the command of the Vaiṣṇava guru I have to be arrogant or brutish, or suffer eternal perdition, I am prepared to welcome such eternal damnation and even sign a contract to that effect. I will not listen to the words of malicious persons in lieu of the command of Śrī Gurudeva. I will dissipate with indomitable courage and conviction the currents of thought of the rest of the world, relying on the strength derived from the lotus feet of Śrī Gurudeva. I confess to this arrogance.

—Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

Endpapers

In his room at the Kuñja-bihārī Maṭha in Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī instructed Śrī Abhaya Caraṇāravinda dāsa, “If you ever get money, print books.” Also present were Śrī Ananta Vāsudeva dāsa (shown here fanning Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī) and a son of Śrī Abhaya Caraṇāravinda dāsa.

Based on a description told by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda to his disciple Śrī Ādi-keśava dāsa, this scene was painted by another of his disciples, Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta dāsa.

Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava

Volume 1

Part 1: Biographical Overview

Part 2: His Message, Mission, and Personality

Volume 2

Part 3: The Preaching Challenge

Part 4: Disciples, Associates, and Acquaintances

Part 5: His Contributions Reviewed

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Abbreviations of Book Titles

An asterisk indicates a compilation of the teachings of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, or a book written about him.

Av: *Amrta vani**

Bg: *Bhagavad-gītā*

Brs: *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*

Cb: *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*

Cc: *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*

Gv: *Śrīla Prabhupādera Goloka-vāṇī**

Hk: *Śrīla Prabhupādera Hari-kathāmṛta**

PST: *Prabhupada Saraswati Thakur** (English)

SB: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*

SBT: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavat Tātparya** (English)

SCT: *Shri Chaitanya's Teachings** (English)

Sj: *Sarasvatī-jayaśrī**

SPl: *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta* (English)

SPU: *Śrī Śrīla Prabhupādera Upadeśāmṛta**

Guide to References

References are given according to the following examples:

Av 10: *Amrta vani,* p. 10.

Cc 1.16: *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā,* chap. 16.

Cc 2.16.22: *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā,* chap. 16, verse 22.

Cc 3.2.75, 77–80: *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā,* chap. 2, verse 75 and verses 77–80.*

Gauḍīya 3.27.8–13: *Gauḍīya,* vol. 3, no. 27, pp. 8–13.

Gauḍīya 14.163: *Gauḍīya,* vol. 14, p. 163.

Gauḍīya 20.48–49.540: *Gauḍīya,* vol. 20, nos. 48–49, p. 540.‡

Harmonist 31.487: *Harmonist,* vol. 31, p. 487.

Hk 2.15: *Śrīla Prabhupādera Hari-kathāmṛta,* vol. 2, p. 15.

Śikṣāṣṭaka 4: *Śikṣāṣṭaka,* verse 4.

Sj 24: *Sarasvatī-jayaśrī,* p. 24.

Some references cited herein are from Gauḍīya Maṭha editions and differ from those in corresponding Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (BBT) publications.

Writings, Lectures, and Colloquies

One

Aṣṭottara-śata Śrī (108 Opulences of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura)

*Based on and expanded from "Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda" (*Gauḍīya *9.440–41), which was a list of sixty-five items authored by "Śrī-Caitanya-maṭhāśrita-sevaka-vṛnda" (the body of servants in the shelter of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha). It was compiled as it appears below by Śrīmad Bhakti Kusuma Śramaṇa Mahārāja (formerly named Śrī Kṛṣṇa-kānti Brahmacārī), after the* tirobhāva *of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.*

1) By appearing in Purī and permeating spiritual knowledge throughout the world, he fulfilled the *śāstrīya* prediction *hy utkale puruṣottamāt.*[*]

2) By receiving the *prasāda* garland of Lord Jagannātha when His cart halted at the door of his father's house, and by grasping the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* when given items to select to indicate his future inclination, he demonstrated the symptoms of an eternally perfect associate of the Supreme Lord.

3) His natural preference for spiritual literature, and his founding of the Cirakumāra Sabhā during the period of his studies, demonstrated him as the manifest ideal of the *Bhāgavatam* injunction *kaumāra ācaret prājño dharmān bhāgavatān iha:* "An intelligent person should practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness from childhood." (SB 7.6.1)

4) Both as a lifelong *brahmacārī* and also in the dress of a *tridaṇḍi-sannyāsī,* by spreading the message of Śrī Caitanya he was the genuine friend of the entire universe.

5) He personally preached Hari-*kīrtana* door to door and also sent devotees sprinkled with his mercy to miscellaneous places for propagating Caitanya-*vāṇī.* Through *saṅkīrtana,* lectures, and slide-show presentations, by opening Pradarśanīs in various regions and thereat arranging festivals and establishing *maṭhas,* by recovering and restoring numerous forgotten holy sites, by revealing service to the deities of Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga– Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī, by publishing in different languages many types of books on *śuddha-bhakti* and also daily, weekly, fortnightly, and monthly periodicals, he multi-facetedly demonstrated in both practice and precept the unprecedented ever-new pastimes of a preacher *ācārya.*

6) He is a sunlike *ācārya* nondifferent from Rūpa Gosvāmī, who was the best of those fulfilling Śrī Caitanya's *mano-'bhīṣṭa.* Additionally, he is the manifest form of those Vedas that describe Vrajendra-nandana, the Supreme Lord situated in His *saṁvit-śakti* (potency of knowledge) and is *advaya-jñāna.*

7) He fulfilled Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's prediction *pṛthivīte āche yata nagarādi grāma*

sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma—that His name would be preached all over the world.

8) He is nondifferent from the *nayana-maṇi* of Śrī Rādhikā, who is *kṛṣṇamayī* (full of, transfused by, and nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa), *kṛṣṇa-pūjā-krīḍāra vasati nagarī* (the abode of the worship and love-sports of Kṛṣṇa), *sarva-kāntiḥ* (who fulfils all of Kṛṣṇa's desires), *sarva-lakṣmī-mayī* (the abode of all goddesses of fortune), and *madana-mohana-mohinī* (the enchanter of the enchanter of Cupid).*

9) He is that *jagad*-guru who bestows the genuine gem of *siddhāntas* concerning *sambandha, abhidheya,* and *prayojana.*

10) Without considering caste, creed, or race, he distributes throughout the universe the *bhāgavata-dharma* of non-envious (*nirmatsara*) and non-duplicitous (*akaitava*) *paramahaṁsa* sadhus.

11) By censuring the false renunciation of objects related to Kṛṣṇa due to adjudging them material, he is the expert example of adopting *yukta-vairāgya* by always engaging those objects in activities for the satisfaction of Hari.

12) Being the *prakāśa-vigraha* (manifested form) of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, he is the savior of the masses overpowered by the spell of diverse opinions.

13) He is the mallet for smashing the illusion of mundane emotionalism, of false *līlā-smaraṇa,* and of deceptively exhibited supposed ecstatic symptoms.

14) He is the examiner of *bhāvāṅkura* (the sprouting of devotional emotions) according to the touchstone verse beginning *kṣāntir avyartha-kālatvam*.†

15) He is the illuminator of the difference between *kāma,* born of desire for selfish happiness, and *prema,* based on desire for Kṛṣṇa's happiness.

16) Transforming the concept of desiring to see Bhagavān for personal pleasure, by disclosing the service-oriented path of regarding Bhagavān as the seer, he is the instructor in the system of giving pleasure to Kṛṣṇa.

17) He is the distributor of the unsullied light of the pure Gauḍīya sun, which dispels the clouds of bad opinions of the thirteen types of so-called Gauḍīyas (the *apa-sampradāyas*).

18) Being nondifferent from Lord Nityānanda, by accepting the entire responsibility for those in his shelter even up to arranging for their food, lodging, and so on, he is the unprecedented bestower of facilities for *bhajana,* and rather than punishing anyone's offense, he most expertly devises appropriate means to correct him.

19) He is the perpetual opponent of any kind of compact with *asat-siddhānta* (false

philosophical conclusions).

20) He is the fearless-minded proclaimer of the truth that, while various results are obtainable from different creeds, the only path for entering the *advaya-jñāna* realm of transcendental pastimes is absolute devotion.

21) He is the contributor of unprecedented linguistic specialties to the necklace of *siddhānta* within Gauḍīya literature.

22) He is the illuminator of the unique opulences of Gauḍīya philosophy.

23) By his personal behavior he is the best preacher of the maxim *sarvasvaṁ gurave dadāt:* "One should give everything, including one's very self, to one's guru."

24) Like the Sudarśana weapon, he destroys the ill-motivated and futile attempt to worship Govinda in one's own way based on the misunderstanding of the ascending method (personal intellectual effort without subservience to a genuine guru), which follows from adopting Śukrācārya's policy rather than Bali Mahārāja's ideal of entirely offering everything to the lotus feet of a genuine guru, or from accepting the direction of a putative guru like Śukrācārya and thus transgressing the order of and rejecting subservience to a genuine guru.

25) He instructs to renounce both *bhoga-tyāga* (the syndrome of alternating indulgence in and renunciation of sense objects) and *tyāga-tyāga* (renunciation of renunciation).

26) He is the paramount propagator of the truth of Śrī Hari (or according to some, Śrī Kṛṣṇa) being the *advaya-jñāna* presiding deity of *sambandha,* Śrī Madana-mohana; of Śrī Rāma being the *advaya-jñāna* presiding deity of *abhidheya,* Śrī Govinda; and of Śrī Kṛṣṇa (or according to some, Śrī Hari) being the *advaya-jñāna* presiding deity of *prayojana,* Śrī Gopīnātha.

27) He is the paramount introducer and propagator throughout the entire universe of the grandeur of the doctrine of the Sātvata *sampradāya.*

28) He is the announcer of the superiority of Viṣṇu-*bhakti* of the *sātvata-pañcarātra.*

29) He is the destroyer of apotheosis, anthropomorphism, and other such wrong theories.

30) Giving the alternative to fake *līlā-smaraṇa,* which is based on deceit, he teaches how to render plenteous service in total devotion to Gopīvallabha, the transcendental Cupid, Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra, in the association of many devotees of the same aspiration.

31) As a great follower of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, he revealed that Mathurā, embellished by the mysterious birth thereat of the unborn, is spiritually superior to Vaikuṇṭha, the unborn Lord's own abode; further superior is Vṛndāvana, the site of the *rāsa-līlā* of He who is *advaya-jñāna;* more superior is Govardhana, where the divine-handed Lord tastes bliss in spiritual exchanges;

and topmost is Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa, being overflooded with the ambrosial nectarean *prema* for the Lord of Gokula, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.[1]

32) He has revealed the progressive excellence of the *karmī,* the *jñānī,* the devotee liberated by knowledge of the Lord's opulences, the devotee fixed in *prema,* the *gopīs,* and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. As an *ācārya* of transcendental science, he propagates the truth that the highest liberated souls, rendering unalloyed *bhakti* with pure hearts, consider as external: following *varṇāśrama-dharma,* offering the results of one's work, working without attachment, and *bhakti* mixed with non-Vedic speculative knowledge.[2]

33) He is the sunlike *ācārya* who, although encouraging everyone to serve in the *rasa* that he is attached to, elucidates the progressive superiority and sweetness of the mellows of *śānta, dāsya, sakhya, vātsalya,* and *mādhurya.*

34) He is a great teacher of the vast ocean of ever-new wonder found in the eight divisions of Śrī Rādhā-Govinda's daily pastimes, particularly of the esoteric doctrine that Their midday pastimes are superlatively wondrous, surpassing even those of the night.

35) As a follower of Śrī Gaurāṅga, he is the revealer of Kurukṣetra, Puruṣottama, and Ālālanātha as places of pastimes comprised of searching for Kṛṣṇa.

36) He is the great revealer of the mystery that within Kṣetra-*maṇḍala* (the greater Purī area), Nīlācala is Kurukṣetra, the sea is the Yamunā or Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Ālālanātha is Paiṭha, and Koṇārka, the place of Sūrya-*pūjā,* is the Rādhā-kuṇḍa of the midday pastimes.[*]

37) By installing the footprints of Śrī Caitanya at Mandar, Kānāi Nāṭaśālā, Jajpur, Kūrmakṣetra, Siṁhācalam, Kovvur, Maṅgalagiri, Chatrabhog, and many other places, he wakens within the heart of all *jīvas* an attachment to seeking Kṛṣṇa through *śrī-nāma-saṅkīrtana-yajña.*

38) He has illustrated that the comparative deliberation of Śrī Gaurasundara, the establisher of the superlative unequaled *acintya-bhedābheda-siddhānta,* consummates the incomplete deliberations known as *śuddha-dvaita-vāda, śuddhādvaita-vāda, viśiṣṭādvaita-vāda,* and *dvaitādvaita-vāda.* He is the pioneer publisher of books in Bengali by or about the four Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas,* which have much enhanced the opulence of the storehouse of Gauḍīya literature. He reveals that despite some differences between their philosophies, the four bona fide Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas* are congeneric.

39) He showed the variety intrinsic to the spiritual pastimes of the sunlike *advaya-jñāna* Supreme Lord, which dispel the darkness of Māyāvāda in all its manifestations—such as Buddhism, Jainism, and the covered Buddhism of Śaṅkara—and of all mundane and atheistic ideologies, such as those of the Śaivas, *śāktas,* skeptics, and of their branches and sub-branches.

40) He shows how in the period after Mahāprabhu the tradition of Vallabhācārya, and in

modern times the Nimbārka *sampradāya,* arose and prospered by imitating Him.

41) He is the preacher of the distinction between *bhāgavata-paramparā* and *pāñcarātrika* guru-*paramparā,* and the revealer of the harmony between the *bhāgavata* path of *bhajana* and the *pāñcarātrika* path of *arcana.*

42) He is the sunlike *ācārya* who incessantly and in all respects cultivates satisfaction of the transcendental senses of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the transcendental Cupid.

43) As the leading Gauḍīya *ācārya* and preacher of irreproachable Kṛṣṇa-*prema,* he remains always far distanced from any subjects or undertakings antithetical to Kṛṣṇa's service, and is perpetually opposed to giving any degree of encouragement to the cultivation of deceitful or fraudulent *bhakti* contrary to *śuddha-bhakti.*

44) He is the founder of the pilgrimage place of highest knowledge—the Parā-vidyā-pīṭha, or school of *bhāgavata* philosophy—and teaches the topmost knowledge: that in the spiritual realm those *Upaniṣads* concentrating on *jñāna, vairāgya,* and *mokṣa* are suitable reading for juveniles, above which one should progressively peruse *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā, Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata,* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* and that the most important object of study is the paramount, unrivalled brilliant commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* namely *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* to be read constantly by the best of liberated souls, and that it is the only exposition of *advaya-jñāna-tattva* that is constituted of elevated *prema.*

45) He has revealed the secrets of and distinction between *pūjā* and *bhajana,* explaining that the word *pūjā* is to be used for deity worship, and the word *bhajana* for *nāma-kīrtana.*

46) He teaches the instruction of *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* that the devotional practice of one at the stage of having *anarthas* progresses from *śraddhā* to *sādhu-saṅga* to *bhajana-kriyā* to *anartha-nivṛtti,* whereas that of one at the stage free from *anarthas* is from *niṣṭhā* to *ruci* to *āsakti* up to the awaking of *bhāva.*

47) Those who consider in terms of doubt and atheism, or that the Supreme is *saguṇa* (possessing attributes) or *nirguṇa* (not possessing attributes)— doctrines inimical to *bhakti* —propagate theories born of *pratyakṣa, parokṣa,* and *aparokṣa.* Far above all these are deliberations on *adhokṣaja-tattva* and *aprākṛta-tattva,* the ultimate conclusion. He is the great illustrator of these comparative analyses.

48) He reveals the distinctions between worshiping lone Vāsudeva, Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa, Sītā-Rāma, Dvārakeśa, Mathureśa, and Gopījanavallabha.

49) He is the great preacher of the linguistic distinction between the words *prākṛta* and *aprākṛta.*

50) He contributed the explanation that the *Brahma-sūtra* aphorism *anāvṛtti-śabdāt* constitutes

śrī-nāma.

51) He bears the light of the *siddhānta* that establishes how the impersonal concept of Bhagavān is surpassed by His fatherhood, more so by His being master and controller, beyond that by reverent sonhood or friendship with Him, and above all, by the dearness of being His lover.

52) Expelling the materialistic outlook (born of desire for sensual enjoyment) that Purāṇic descriptions concerning Kṛṣṇa and His associates are merely stories, historical narrations, parables, myths, idolatry, or the like, he is the great illuminator of the variety of eternal spiritual pastimes that are *adhokṣaja* and *aprākṛta.*

53) He is the distinguished preacher of *vidvad-rūḍhi* in a world flooded by *avidvad-rūḍhi.*

54) He is the instructor of the *tṛṇād api sunīcena* verse and is the manifest form of Lord Caitanya's message *kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ.*

55) He is the composer of many books in Bengali, English, Sanskrit, and other languages.

56) He is the distinguished publisher of a range of rare books of predecessor *ācāryas,* together with *anvaya,* translation, previous commentaries, and his own further elucidations.

57) He is the first producer of *Vaiṣṇava-mañjuṣā-samāhṛti.*

58) He established the unprecedented "column of fame" of various indexes of verses, words, and so on, that describe places, times, and persons mentioned therein.*

59) He is the inaugurator of daily, weekly, fortnightly, and monthly publications in Bengali, English, Sanskrit, Hindi, Oriya, Assamese, and other languages.

60) Through readings, explanations, lectures, discussions, exhibitions, and more, he has established *bhakti-sadācāra* (appropriate behavior within devotional service).

61) He restored numerous lost holy places, such as Modadrumadvīpa, Ḥtudvīpa, and Śukatala.

62) He inaugurated sixty-four *maṭhas* or also preaching centers, in various places within India and beyond, and is distinguished for having revealed service to deities.

63) He established unprecedented *pradarśanīs* in many places, including Kurukṣetra, Śrīdhāma Māyāpur, Calcutta, Dacca, Patna, Kāśī, Prayāga, and others.

64) He is the prominent instructor in forswearing the evil desire to be "Big I," which is actually servitude to "Māyārāṇī" impelled by egoism, to instead become "Good I" in service to Rādhārāṇī, following Mahāprabhu's principle of *tṛṇād api sunīcena.**

65) He is the repeated instructor in transforming the search for others' faults into seeking one's own and rectifying them.

66) He is the sunlike *ācārya* who insists that his disciples must daily chant at least one lakh of *harināma.*

67) For all persons at all times and in all situations, he is the best of all *ācāryas* of *bhāgavata-dharma.*

68) He is the distinguished preacher of *śrutekṣita-śuddha-bhaktisiddhānta-kīrtana.*[†]

69) He is the distinguished establisher of the *mano-'bhīṣṭa* of Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrī Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī.

70) He is the distinguished preacher and best of all servitors of Gaura-*nāma,* Gaura-*dhāma,* and Gaura-*kāma.*

71) He is the distinguished founder of the Daiva-varṇāśrama Saṅgha, meant to establish the propriety customs of *daiva-varṇāśrama-dharma,* which is approved by *paramahaṁsas.*

72) He is the distinguished founder of the Anukūla-Kṛṣṇānuśīlanāgāra, meant for propagating the necessity for devotees of Kṛṣṇa to worship Him in the mood of separation.

73) He is the founder of the Thakur Bhakti Vinode Institute, meant for sowing the seed of non-envious *bhāgavata-dharma* in the hearts of children inclined to worldly education.

74) He is the foremost general of Śrī Svarūpa-Rūpa's empire of *siddhānta.*

75) His divine form is composed of *mādhurya, audārya* (magnanimity), and *prema.*

76) He is the distinguished teacher who respects the path of *vidhi* and follows the path of *rāga.*

77) He preaches about the insignificance of the opponents of service to Śrī Rādhā-Govinda enacted on the *rāga-mārga.*

78) He preaches about the narrow-mindedness of not accepting gradations within service to Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

79) He eminently preaches that the highest need of all *jīvas* is to follow the ideal of service given by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī.

80) He is the practitioner of service to Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī with high respect.

81) He is the Sudarśana weapon that decapitates the heresy of considering the Viṣṇu deity to be merely stone, the guru to be an ordinary human being, a Vaiṣṇava to be a member of a

particular caste or race, the water sanctified by washing the feet of Viṣṇu or a Vaiṣṇava to be ordinary water, the name or mantra of Viṣṇu to be ordinary sound, or anything other than Viṣṇu, the controller of all that exists, to be equal to Him.*

82) He eminently revealed that pure Vaiṣṇavas are faultless and the best of all people, and is the flaming bolt that rebuts any kind of cavil or attack directed at Vaiṣṇavas or Vaiṣṇava dharma.

83) He is the *jagad*-guru replete with knowledge of the science of Kṛṣṇa, and whose only weapon is *kīrtana.*

84) He notably propagates the esoteric understanding that a disciple's duty is to act most carefully according to the guru's indications, knowing him to be exceedingly dear to Mukunda and nondifferent from Rādhā.

85) He is the celebrated and unparalleled preacher of the Veda-*vāṇī, nānyaḥ panthā vidyate 'yanāya (*There is no way for liberation other than this knowledge) in relation to service to the guru's lotus feet.[3]

86) He preponderantly illuminates the even greater beauty of serving the *āśraya-vigraha* over the *viṣaya-vigraha.*

87) He is the ideal and best teacher of the *siddhānta* that it is auspicious for a *jīva* to consider himself different from Bhagavān, who is the shelter of all, and sheer atheism to identify himself as nondifferent from Him.

88) By his unmatched devotional practice he brilliantly illuminates the principle of perceiving Kṛṣṇa's mercy in wealth, danger, and indeed all circumstances and therefore restraining the senses and engaging them solely for His satisfaction.

89) He is the illustrious *ācārya* of the *siddhānta* that, whether regarded as a means or the end, the holy name is the only shelter, and that simultaneous to purification of consciousness through *nāma-bhajana,* the Lord's form, qualities, and pastimes appear in the Vṛndāvana of the heart as the full manifestation and very being of Him who is named.

90) He is the king of doctors—the giver of the genuine understanding that health of the body and mind is achieved through health of the soul.

91) He gave practical shape to the dictum *kṛṣṇārthe akhila-ceṣṭā* (Everything should be done for Kṛṣṇa) being applied as one's sole activity.[4]

92) By his explanation of the *anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam* verse, he revealed the secret of the pastime of cleaning the Guṇḍicā temple.

93) By practice and precept, in innumerable ways he is the instructor of the verses *bhakti-*

mukha-nirīkṣaka karma-yoga-jñāna and *bhaktis tvayi sthiratarā.*[*]

94) He is the sunlike *ācārya* who shed philosophical light on *daśamūla* (which is described in the *āmnāyaḥ prāha* verse), the essence of Veda, Vedānta, and all written scriptures.[†]

95) He is the great preacher of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the writings of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, literature of the spiritual world.

96) He is the superhuman economist who employs and applies every time, place, and person in service to Kṛṣṇa and His devotees.

97) He is the sincere sympathizer toward and bestower of non-malefic mercy upon persons inimical to Kṛṣṇa and undesirous of serving Him.

98) He has expanded people's faith in *mahā-prasāda,* Guru-Gaurāṅga, Govinda, the holy name, and the lotus feet of Vaiṣṇavas.[‡]

99) He is the inaugurator of *Śrī Navadvīpa-pañjikā,* and the propagator of observing remembrance festivals of Hari-guru-Vaiṣṇavas by the method of pure *saṅkīrtana.*

100) Delineating the difference between *nāma, nāmābhāsa,* and *nāmāparādha,* he is the instructor in *śuddha-nāma-kīrtana.*

101) Casting out the rituals of the *smārtas* of little understanding, he shows the light of and abundantly preaches the value of procedures given in Vaiṣṇava literature.

102) He is celebrated for reestablishing and conducting with *saṅkīrtana* groups *parikramās* of the nine islands of Śrī Navadvīpa-*dhāma,* and also of Gauḍa-*maṇḍala,* Kṣetra-*maṇḍala,* and Vraja-*maṇḍala.*

103) He analyzes the nature of *nāmāparādha, dhāmāparādha, sevāparādha, gurvaparādha,* and *vaiṣṇavāparādha* and shows how to wholly forswear them.

104) He instructs all to constantly serve Kṛṣṇa without dwelling on the past or caring for the future.

105) He is the unique instructor in forswearing or avoiding any information, endeavor, companionship, honor, or philosophical conclusion, or acceptance of disciples or connection with persons, that is contaminated, impure, or unfavorable for development of *bhakti;* and moreover, to relinquish deceit, hypocrisy, and desire for material enjoyment or liberation from material existence.

106) He restored the lost glory of Suvarṇa Vihāra.

107) He reestablished the Śrī Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā, made the Śrī Navadvīpadhāma-

pracāriṇī Sabhā glow brightly, and is the esteemed inaugurator of the Śrī Vraja-dhāma-pracāriṇī Sabhā.

108) In superlative manner he nourishes the *vipralambha* of Śrī Gaurasundara, the very form of *vipralambha,* personally practices and is the best preacher of Śrī Rūpa-Raghunātha's instructions, satisfies better than all others Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is tightly embraced by the *āśraya-vigraha* Śrī Rādhā, and is the best preacher of the superexcellence of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

Two

Two Poems by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

These encapsulate important philosophical perspectives central to his teachings and are well known among his followers.

Prākṛta-rasa-śata-dūṣiṇī
(A Hundred Refutations of Mundane Mellows)

Published in Sajjana-toṣaṇī *19.9.313–20*

Preamble

Among higher classes of people in society, there are three main paths for traveling through the kingdoms of various beliefs regarding transcendence: *karma, jñāna,* and *bhakti. Karma-mārga* involves arrangements for obtaining temporary worldly benefits enjoyed by souls bound on the platform of materially conditioned life. *Jñāna-mārga* entails renouncing temporary, material things as well as the impermanent distractions of patriotic interests and the like; one then searches after the undifferentiated spiritual reality of impersonal Brahman. The third path, *bhakti-mārga,* the path of pure devotion, comprises positive activity wholly transcendental to *karma, jñāna,* and matter and is the process of favorably practicing activities conducive for serving the object most worthy of service, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

There are three distinct developmental stages extending from *sādhana* to *sādhya:* the *sādhana* itself, then the awakening of *bhāva,* and finally *prema-bhakti.* Obstacles arise while one is cultivating aspects of knowledge related to the goal, namely various emotions and *prema. Anartha-nivṛtti* means becoming free from those impediments.

The conceptions expressed in the following poem are founded in the wonderful and supremely astonishing pastimes of Śrī Gaurāṅga-sundara and in the opinions established by the Gosvāmīs, the Lord's eternal associates in those pastimes.[1]

(1)

prākṛta ceṣṭate bhāi kabhu rasa haya nā
jaḍīya prākṛta-rasa śuddha-bhakta gāya nā

O brother! No material efforts can ever effect the awakening of *rasa.* A pure devotee of the Lord never glorifies any *rasa* born of the dull material world.

(2)

prākṛta-rasera śikṣā-bhikṣā śiṣye cāya nā
rati binā jei rasa tāhā guru deya nā

True disciples do not aspire to desire to ask their gurus for instruction regarding material *rasa.* A genuine guru does not teach any *rasa* devoid of *rati* (transcendental loving attachment to the Lord).

(3)

nāma rasa dui vastu bhakta kabhu jāne nā
nāma rase bheda āche, bhakta kabhu bale nā

A devotee never considers the holy name of Kṛṣṇa and *rasa* as two separate entities, nor does he ever say that there is a difference between them.

(4)

'ahaṁ-mama' bhāva-sattve nāma kabhu haya nā
bhoga-buddhi nā chāḍile aprākṛta haya nā

The holy name is never revealed to one in the bodily conception of life, who thinks in terms of "I" and "mine." Without giving up the enjoying mentality the transcendental platform can never be attained.

(5)

prākṛta jaḍera bhoge kṛṣṇa-sevā haya nā
jaḍa-vastu kona-o kāle aprākṛta haya nā

Kṛṣṇa-*sevā* can never be performed while enjoying material sense objects. Material objects can never acquire attributes of transcendence.

(6)

jaḍa-sattā vartamāne cit kabhu haya nā
jaḍa-vastu cit haya bhakte kabhu bale nā

Dull material objects are never conscious. A devotee never ascribes consciousness to material objects.

(7)

jaḍīya viṣaya-bhoga bhakta kabhu kare nā
jaḍa-bhoga, kṛṣṇa-sevā kabhu sama haya nā

A true devotee never engages in enjoyment of material objects. Material enjoyment can never be the same as Kṛṣṇa-*sevā.*

(8)

nija-bhogya kāme bhakta 'prema' kabhu bale nā
'rase ḍagamaga acho' śiṣye guru bale nā

A genuine devotee never states that selfish enjoyment of one's senses in mundane lust is tantamount to *prema.* A bona fide guru does not tell his disciple, "You are absorbed in the mellows of divine *rasa.*"

(9)

'rase ḍagamaga āmi' kabhu guru bale nā
jaḍīya rasera kathā śiṣye guru bale nā

A genuine guru never claims "I am absorbed in *rasa.*" A bona fide guru never instructs his disciples on subjects of worldly mellows.

(10)

jaḍa-rasa-gāne kabhu śreyaḥ keha labhe nā
kṛṣṇake prākṛta boli' bhakta kabhu gāya nā

No one has ever attained ultimate benefit by glorifying mundane mellows. A genuine devotee never proclaims that Lord Kṛṣṇa is mundane.

(11)

nāmake prākṛta boli' kṛṣṇe jaḍa jāne nā
kṛṣṇa-nāma-rase bheda śuddha-bhakta māne nā

A devotee never says that the holy name of Kṛṣṇa is material, for he does not consider Kṛṣṇa in any way material. A pure devotee does not accept any distinction between the holy name of Kṛṣṇa and *rasa.*

(12)

nāme-rase bheda āche, guru śikṣā deya nā
rasa lābha kari' śeṣe sādhana to' haya nā

A bona fide guru never teaches that there is a difference between the holy name and *rasa.* Even after attaining genuine *rasa,* the regulative *sādhana* should not be abandoned.

(13)

kṛtrima panthāya nāme rasodaya haya nā
rasa haite kṛṣṇa-nāma vilomete haya nā

Transcendental mellows can never arise from artificial practices of chanting the holy name. Kṛṣṇa's name does not come invertedly from *rasa.*

(14)

rasa haite rati-śraddhā kakhana-i haya nā
śraddhā haite rati chāḍā bhāgavata gāya nā

Neither *rati* nor *śraddhā* ever develop from *rasa. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and realized devotees never declare that *rati* develops from *śraddhā.*

(15)

rati-yukta rasa chāḍā śuddha-bhakta bale nā
sādhanete rati rasa guru kabhu bale nā

A pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa never speaks of anything other than *rasa* endowed with *rati.* A bona fide guru never claims that *rati* and *rasa* manifest during the preliminary stages of devotional practice (*sādhana-bhakti*).

(16)

bhāva-kāle je avasthā sādhanāgre bale nā
vaidhī śraddhā sādhanete rāgānuga haya nā

The pure devotee does not say that the situation of one in *bhāva* is attained at the beginning of *sādhana-bhakti.* Nor does faith in the rules and regulations (*vaidhī-śraddhā*) alone give rise to *rāgānuga-bhakti.*

(17)

bhāvera aṅkura ho' le vidhi āra thāke nā
rāgānuga śraddhā mātre jāta-rati haya nā

When *bhāva* actually sprouts, the need for following scriptural rules (*vidhi*) does not remain. Faith in *rāgānuga-bhakti* is insufficient for awakening *rati.*

(18)

ajāta-ratite kabhu bhāva-labdha bale nā
rāgānuga sādhakere jāta-bhāva bale nā

If within his heart transcendental attachment has not yet developed, a devotee is never said to have attained *bhāva.* Beginning practioners on the path of spontaneous devotion (*rāgānuga-sādhakas*) never say that they have experienced awakening of *bhāva.*

(19)

rāgānuga sādhakere labdha-rasa bale nā
rāgānuga sādhya-bhāva rati chāḍā haya nā

Rāgānuga-sādhakas never say that they have attained *rasa.* Pure emotions characteristic of the goal of spontaneous devotion cannot be attained without progressing through the stage of *rati.*

(20)

bhāvāṅkura-samāgame vaidhī bhakti thāke nā
rucike ratira saha kabhu eka jāne nā

When the seed of intense divine emotion sprouts as pure *bhāva,* one no longer need adhere to scriptural regulations (*vaidhī bhakti*). One should never consider taste for devotional service (*ruci*) eqivalent to *rati.*

(21)

rāgānuga bolile-i prāpta-rasa jāne nā
vidhi-śodhya jane kabhu rāgānuga bale nā

Divine *rasa* can never be factually attained simply by claiming "I am a *rāgānuga-bhakta.*" A beginning student, who must follow scriptural injunctions to be purified, should never profess to be on the level of performing spontaneous loving service unto the Lord.

(22)

sādhanera pūrve keha bhāvāṅkura pāya nā
jaḍe śraddhā nā chāḍile rati kabhu haya nā

Without first following the regulative injunctions of the scriptures, no one can experience the sprouting of pure ecstatic emotions. Without giving up faith in material things *rati* can never be attained.

(23)

jāta-bhāva nā haile rasika to' haya nā
jaḍa-bhāva nā chāḍile rasika to' haya nā

If divine ecstatic emotions have not yet woken, there is no possibility of becoming a *rasika.* Unless material emotions are entirely rejected, one cannot become a *rasika.*

(24)

mūla-dhana rasa-lābha rati-vinā haya nā

gāche nā uṭhite kāṅdi vṛkṣa-mūle pāya nā

Attainment of *rasa,* the greatest wealth, is never possible without first developing *rati,* just as without first climbing the branch of a tree its fruits cannot be reached.

(25)

sādhane anartha āche, rasodaya haya nā
bhāva-kāle nāma-gāne chala-rasa haya nā

Rasa never awakens in one performing *sādhana* with *anarthas.* Deceitful devotional mellows can never be present when the holy name is chanted from the platform of *bhāva.*

(26)

siddhānta-vihīna haile kṛṣṇe citta lāge nā
sambandha-hīnera kabhu abhidheya haya nā

Without knowledge of *siddhānta,* the heart cannot be spiritually attuned with Lord Kṛṣṇa. If one lacks knowledge of relationship with Kṛṣṇa (*sambandha*), then proper execution of devotional service in relationship to Kṛṣṇa (*abhidheya*) is impossible.

(27)

sambandha-vihīna jana prayojana pāya nā
ku-siddhānte vyasta jana kṛṣṇa-sevā kare nā

Without knowledge of *sambandha,* one can never attain *prayojana,* the supreme goal of life (pure love of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa-*prema*). Those who remain busy with bogus philosophical conclusions cannot perform actual service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

(28)

siddhānta-alasa jana anartha to' chāḍe nā
jaḍe kṛṣṇa bhrama kari' kṛṣṇa-sevā kare nā

A person lazy in understanding *siddhānta* does not give up *anarthas.* One who mistakes Kṛṣṇa as belonging to the material plane can never render actual service to the Lord.

(29)

kṛṣṇa-nāme bhakta kabhu jaḍa-buddhi kare nā
anartha nā gele nāme rūpa dekhā deya nā

A genuine devotee never maintains material conceptions about the names of Kṛṣṇa. If

anarthas have not been expelled, chanting of the holy name will never reveal the Lord's form.

(30)

anartha nā gele nāme guṇa bujhā jaya nā
anartha nā gele nāme kṛṣṇa-sevā haya nā

As long as *anarthas* remain, chanting of the holy name will never produce understanding of the Lord's transcendental qualities. As long as *anarthas* remain, chanting of the holy name will not actually be service to Kṛṣṇa.

(31)

rūpa-guṇa-līlā-sphūrti nāma chāḍā haya nā
rūpa-guṇa-līlā haite kṛṣṇa-nāma haya nā

Revelation of the Lord's transcendental form, qualities, and pastimes are never manifest in the absence of His holy name. Kṛṣṇa's name is never separate from His transcendental form, qualities, or pastimes.

(32)

rūpa haite nāma-sphūrti, guru kabhu bale nā
guṇa haite nāma-sphūrti, guru kabhu bale nā

A genuine guru never asserts that revelation of the Lord's name develops from revelation of His form or qualities.

(33)

līlā haite nāma-sphūrti, rūpānuga bale nā
nāma-nāmī dui vastu, rūpānuga bale nā

True followers of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī (*rūpānugas*) never claim that revelation of the Lord's name develops from revelation of His pastimes. *Rūpānugas* never state that Kṛṣṇa's name and Kṛṣṇa Himself are two separate phenomena.

(34)

rasa āge, rati pāche, rūpānuga bale nā
rasa āge, śraddhā pāche, guru kabhu bale nā

Rūpānugas never say that the stage of realizing *rasa* precedes the development of *rati.* A bona fide guru never professes that realization of such mellows precedes the development

of pure faith (*śraddhā*).

(35)

rati āge, śraddhā pāche, rūpānuga bale nā
krama-patha chāḍi' siddhi rūpānuga bale nā

Rūpānugas never say that transcendental attachment is attained before faith, or that the perfection of devotion (*siddhi*) can be achieved by abandoning the path of progressive stages of development.

(36)

mahājana-patha chāḍi' navya-pathe dhāya nā
aparādha-saha nāma kakhana-i haya nā

Followers of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī never leave the path of great devotees (*mahājanas*) and run to pursue a new path. One who commits offenses can never chant the holy name.

(37)

nāme prākṛtārtha-buddhi bhakta kabhu haya nā
aparādha-yukta nāma bhakta kabhu laya nā

A devotee never ascribes any mundane, materialistic conception to the holy name. A devotee never chants the holy name in an offensive manner.

(38)

nāmete prākṛta-buddhi rūpānuga kare nā
kṛṣṇa-rūpe jaḍa-buddhi rūpānuga kare nā

Rūpānugas never ascribe material qualities to the holy name. *Rūpānugas* never consider the Lord's transcendental form to be mundane.

(39)

kṛṣṇa-guṇe jaḍa-buddhi rūpānuga kare nā
parikara-vaiśiṣṭyake prākṛta to' jāne nā

Rūpānugas never regard the Supreme Lord's qualities as material, or the characteristics of the Lord's associates and paraphernalia as mundane.

(40)

kṛṣṇa-līlā jaḍa-tulya rūpānuga bale nā
kṛṣṇetara bhogya-vastu kṛṣṇa kabhu haya nā

Rūpānugas never equate the Lord's transcendental pastimes with mundane activities, or consider that Lord Kṛṣṇa ever becomes an object of sense gratification.

(41)

jaḍake anartha chāḍā āra kichu māne nā
jaḍāsakti-baśe rase kṛṣṇa-jñāna kare nā

Rūpānugas perceive everything material as simply undesirable. The experience of mellows based on attachment to matter never reveals transcendental knowledge of Kṛṣṇa.

(42)

kṛṣṇa-nāma, kṛṣṇa-rūpa kabhu jaḍa bale nā
kṛṣṇa-guṇa, kṛṣṇa-līlā kabhu jaḍa bale nā

Rūpānugas never say that Kṛṣṇa's holy name, transcendental form, divine qualities, or sublime pastimes are mundane.

(43)

jaḍa-rūpa anarthete kṛṣṇa-bhrama kare nā
kṛṣṇa-nāma-rūpa-guṇe jaḍa-buddhi kare nā

Rūpānugas do not mistake Kṛṣṇa's form to be material or subject to mundane defects, nor ever consider His divine names, forms, and qualities from a materialistic perspective.

(44)

nāma-rūpa-guṇa-līlā jaḍa boli' māne nā
jaḍa-nāma-rūpa-guṇe kṛṣṇa kabhu bale nā

Rūpānugas do not regard Kṛṣṇa's transcendental names, forms, qualities, or pastimes as mundane, or that any material names, forms, or qualities are attributable to Kṛṣṇa.

(45)

jaḍa-śūnya aprākṛta nāma chāḍā bale nā
jaḍa-śūnya aprākṛta rūpa chāḍā dekhe nā

Rūpānugas chant nothing other than the pure transcendental names, which are completely free from material contact, and see nothing other than Kṛṣṇa's pure transcendental form,

which is free from material contact.

(46)

jaḍa-śūnya aprākṛta guṇa chāḍā śune nā
jaḍa-śūnya aprākṛta līlā chāḍā seve nā

Rūpānugas hear of nothing but the pure transcendental qualities of Kṛṣṇa, which are completely free from material contact, and serve nothing other than His pure transcendental pastimes, which are free from all material contact.

(47)

anartha thākāra kāle jaḍa-rūpe maje nā
anartha thākāra kāle jaḍa-guṇe miśe nā

While still contaminated by *anarthas, rūpānugas* should not be charmed by mundane forms. As long as these obstacles remain, they should not associate with mundane qualities.

(48)

anartha thākāra kāle jaḍa-līlā bhoge nā
anartha thākāra kāle śuddha-nāma chāḍe nā

A person still contaminated by *anarthas* should not try to enjoy mundane pursuits, nor ever cease trying to purely chant the holy name.

(49)

anartha thākāra kāle rasa-gāna kare nā
anartha thākāra kāle siddhi-labdha bale nā

While still contaminated by *anarthas,* one should never sing songs concerning transcendental mellows or ever state that he has attained perfection.

(50–52)

anartha thākāra kāle līlā-gāna kare nā
anartha-nivṛtti-kāle nāma jaḍa bale nā

anartha-nivṛtti-kāle rūpe jaḍa dekhe nā
anartha-nivṛtti-kāle guṇe jaḍa bujhe nā

anartha-nivṛtti-kāle jaḍa līlā seve nā

rūpānuga gurudeva śiṣya-hiṁsā kare nā

While still contaminated by *anarthas,* one should never sing of the Lord's confidential pastimes, nor should one trying to overcome these impediments ever regard the transcendental name, form, qualities, or pastimes of Kṛṣṇa as mundane. True *rūpānuga* gurus do not act maliciously toward their disciples [by misleading them in the manner suggested in these verses].

(53)

guru tyāgi jaḍe āśā kabhu bhakta kare nā
mahājana-pathe doṣa kabhu guru deya nā

A true devotee never rejects his guru out of desire for personal enjoyment. A genuine guru never faults the devotional path shown by great devotees.

(54)

guru-mahājana-vākye bheda kabhu haya nā
sādhanera pathe kāṅṭā sad-guru deya nā

The explanations of a bona fide guru and those of previous great devotees never differ. A genuine guru never places thornlike deterrents on the path of *sādhana.*

(55)

adhikāra avicāra rūpānuga kare nā
anartha-anvita dāse rasa-śikṣā deya nā

Rūpānugas do not misjudge spiritual qualification, and thus do not instruct a disciple still overwhelmed by *anarthas* about the science of intimate devotional mellows.

(56)

bhāgavata padya boli' ku-vyākhyā to' kare nā
loka-saṁgrahera tare krama-patha chāḍe nā

True devotees do not consider *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* mere poetry and thus malinterpret it, nor for the sake of attracting followers do they ever abandon the gradual path of *bhakti.*

(57)

nā uṭhiyā vṛkṣopari phala dhari' ṭāne nā
rūpānuga krama-patha vilopa to' kare nā

Just as one cannot take fruit from a tree without first climbing it, *rūpānugas* do not transgress the gradual path of *bhakti*.*

(58)

anarthake 'artha' boli' ku-pathete laya nā
prākṛta-sahaja-mata aprākṛta bale nā

One should never follow the mistaken course of declaring contaminations to be useful for *bhakti,* nor ever say that the opinions of the *prākṛta-sahajiyās* are *aprākṛta.*

(59)

anartha nā gele śiṣye jāta-rati bale nā
anartha-viśiṣṭa śiṣye rasa-tattva bale nā

As long as a disciple's *anarthas* remain, he should not be told that he possesses *rati,* nor to one who is predominated by *anarthas* should the science of *rasa* be taught.

(60)

aśakta komala-śraddhe rasa-kathā bale nā
anadhikārīre rase adhikāra deya nā

Topics of devotional mellows should not be told to one whose faith is pliable and vulnerable; that privilege should not be given to one who is unqualified.

(61)

vaidha-bhakta-jane kabhu rāgānuga jāne nā
komala-śraddhāke kabhu rasika to' jāne nā

Devotees on the platform of following regulated scriptural injunctions (*vaidha-bhaktas*) cannot understand the exalted stage of the practitioners on the path of spontaneous devotional service (*rāgānugas*), nor can those of fragile faith understand the *rasikas.*

(62)

svalpa-śraddhā-jane kabhu jāta-rati māne nā
svalpa-śraddhā-jane rasa upadeśa kare nā

Persons of little faith should not be regarded as highly developed in loving devotional attachment, nor should they ever be instructed in topics concerning transcendental mellows.

(63)

jāta-rati prauḍha-śraddhā-saṅga tyāga kare nā
komala-śraddhere kabhu rasa diyā seve nā

Persons of developed devotion do not give up the association of those of advanced faith. If devotees of pliable faith are instructed in devotional mellows, they will not be able to experience them.

(64)

kṛṣṇera sevana lāgi' jaḍa-rase miśe nā
rasodaye kona jīve 'śiṣya-buddhi' kare nā

One should not mix material mellows with service to Kṛṣṇa. One in whom *rasa* has woken never deems anyone a disciple.

(65)

rasika-bhakata-rāja kabhu śiṣya kare nā
rasika-janera śiṣya ei bhāva chāḍe nā

The highest devotee, the king among *rasikas,* never makes disciples; but genuine disciples of such a *rasika* never reject the mood of being his disciple.*

(66)

sādhana chāḍile bhāva udaya to' haya nā
rāgānuga jānile-i sādhana to' chāḍe nā

If *sādhana* is given up, *bhāva* can never arise. Even after taking to *rāgānuga-bhakti* one should never give up *sādhana.*

(67)

bhāva nā haile kabhu rasodaya haya nā
āge rasodaya, pare raty-udaya haya nā

Without the appearance of *bhāva, rasa* can never arise. Realization of *rasa* never occurs before the development of *rati.*

(68)

āge raty-udaya, pare śraddhodaya haya nā
rasābhiṣṭa labhi' pare sādhana to' haya nā

Rati never arises before the appearance of *śraddhā,* nor can one's desired *rasa* be attained before having practiced *sādhana.*

(69)

sāmagrīra amilane sthāyī-bhāva haya nā
sthāyi-bhāva-vyatireke rase sthiti haya nā

Without having progressed through the stages of the *bhakti* process [*anartha-nivrtti, niṣṭhā, ruci,* etc.], no one can become fixed in the constitutional position of loving Godhead, and thus cannot be situated in his eternal *rasa.*

(70)

bhoge mana, jaḍe śraddhā cit prakāśa kare nā
nāme śraddhā nā haile jaḍa-buddhi chāḍe nā

Those whose minds are absorbed in enjoyment of matter and who maintain faith in that which is material can never experience the revelation of pure spiritual consciousness. Without absolute faith in the Lord's holy name one's mundane mentality can never be cast off.

(71)

jaḍa-buddhi nā chāḍile nāma kṛpā kare nā
nāma kṛpā nā karile līlā śunā jāya nā

One reluctant to give up the materialistic mentality does not receive the mercy of the holy name, without getting which one cannot properly hear recitations of *līlā.*

(72)

nāmake jānile jaḍa, kāma dūra haya nā
rūpake mānile jaḍa, kāma dūra haya nā

One who thinks that the holy name or transcendental form of Kṛṣṇa is mundane can never become free from lust.

(73)

guṇake bujhile jaḍa, kāma dūra haya nā
līlāke purile jaḍe, kāma dūra haya nā

One who thinks that the divine qualities or eternal pastimes of Kṛṣṇa are mundane can never become free from lust.

(74)

nāme jaḍa-vyavadhāne rūpodaya haya nā
nāme jaḍa-vyavadhāne guṇodaya haya nā

Due to blockage caused by chanting the holy name with material conceptions, Kṛṣṇa's pure transcendental form and qualities cannot be realized.

(75)

aparādha-vyavadhāne rasa-lābha haya nā
aparādha-vyavadhāne nāma kabhu haya nā

Due to blockage caused by offenses, *rasa* cannot be attained, nor can the holy name manifest.

(76)

vyavahita līlā-gāne kāma dūra haya nā
aparādha-vyavadhāne siddha-deha pāya nā

One infested by offenses may improperly sing the pastimes of the Lord, but this will never remove the lust in his heart. Due to blockage caused by offenses, one's eternal spiritual body will never be attained.

(77)

sevopakaraṇa karṇe nā śunile haya nā
jaḍopakaraṇa dehe līlā śonā jaya nā

Hearing is not performed if not through an ear dedicated for service, nor should *līlā* be recited to one whose body is an instrument of the material energy.

(78)

sevāya unmūkha ha' le jaḍa-kathā haya nā
natuvā cin-maya kathā kabhu śruta haya nā

One enthusiastic for rendering *sevā* does not indulge in topics related to the mundane world. Conversely, confidential topics about the all-conscious spiritual world should never be heard by one not on that platform.

Vaiṣṇava Ke?
(Who Is a Vaiṣṇava?)

Composed in 1920 and first published in Sajjana-toṣaṇī *(23.2.37) as "Nirjane Anartha" (The faults of solitary worship)*

(1)

duṣṭa mana! tumi kisera vaiṣṇava?
pratiṣṭhāra tare, nirjanera ghare,
tava 'harināma' kevala 'kaitava'

Wicked mind! What kind of Vaiṣṇava are you? Your show of chanting *harināma* in a solitary place is for false prestige—simply hypocrisy.

(2)

jaḍera pratiṣṭhā, śukarera viṣṭhā,
jāno nā ki tāhā 'māyāra vaibhava'
kanaka kāminī, divasa-yāminī,
bhāviyā ki kāja, anitya se saba

Mundane prestige is like hog stool. Do you not know that such repute is an illusion cast by *māyā?* What is the value of contemplating wealth and women day and night? All of that is temporary.

(3)

tomāra kanaka, bhogera janaka,
kanakera dvāre sevaho 'mādhava'
kāminīra kāma, nahe tava dhāma,
tāhāra—mālika kevala 'yādava'

Your wealth is the progenitor of material enjoyment. Use it to serve Mādhava. You are not meant to lust for women, whose only proprietor is Yādava (Kṛṣṇa).

(4)

pratiṣṭhāśā-taru, jaḍa-māyā-maru,
nā pela 'rāvaṇa' yujhiyā 'rāghava'
vaiṣṇavī pratiṣṭhā, tāte koro niṣṭhā,
tāhā nā bhajile labhibe raurava

Rāvaṇa fought with Lord Rāmacandra to gain the tree of worldly reputation, yet that apparent oasis was merely a mirage in the desert of the Lord's material potency. Be attached to the solid position of a Vaiṣṇava. If you neglect worshiping the Lord from that position, you will attain hell.

(5)

harijana-dveṣa, pratiṣṭhāśā-kleśa,
kara kena tabe tāhāra gaurava
vaiṣṇavera pāche, pratisthāśā āche,
tā'te kabhu nahe 'anitya-vaibhava'

Why do you envy Vaiṣṇavas and suffer torment by desiring the honor accorded them? Vaiṣṇavas have left behind desires for worldly fame; the fame that automatically follows them is never a temporary worldly opulence.

(6)

se hari-sambandha, śūnya-māyā-gandha,
tāhā kabhu naya 'jaḍera kaitava'
pratiṣṭhā-caṇḍālī, nirjanatā-jāli,
ubhaye jāniho māyika raurava

That fame comes from a devotee's relationship with Lord Hari. It is devoid of even a trace of worldly illusion and is untinged by the materialistic cheating propensity. The prestige of so-called popularity within the material realm is compared to a female dog-eater, and attempting to live in solitude to supposedly perform *bhajana* is compared to an entangling network. Know that anyone striving in either of these ways lives in the hell of illusion.

(7)

'kīrtana chāḍiba, pratiṣṭhā mākhiba,'
ki kāja ḍhuḍiyā tādṛśa gaurava
mādhavendra purī, bhāva-ghare curi,
nā karila kabhu sadāi jānaba

"I shall give up *kīrtana* and smear myself with worldly honor"—what is the good of seeking that kind of glory? I will always remind you that Mādhavendra Purī never deceived himself by stealing from the storehouse of emotion.

(8)

tomāra pratiṣṭhā, 'śukarera viṣṭhā',
tāra-saha sama kabhu nā mānava

matsaratā-vaśe, tumi jaḍa-rase,
majecha chāḍiyā kīrtana-sauṣṭava

Your cheap reputation is hog stool, and should never be equated with the honor accorded to eminent devotees like Mādhavendra Purī. Under the sway of envy, after having abandoned the excellence of congregational *kīrtana,* you have absorbed yourself in material *rasa.*

(9)

tāi duṣṭa mana, 'nirjana bhajana,'
pracāricha chale 'kuyogī-vaibhava'
prabhu sanātane, parama yatane,
śikṣā dila yāhā, cinta sei saba

Therefore, O wicked mind, the glories of self-styled solitary worship are propagated only by false yogis using unscrupulous means to deceive others. To save yourself from these pitfalls, please carefully contemplate the instructions given by Lord Caitanya to Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī.*

(10)

sei du'ṭi kathā, bhula' nā sarvathā,
uccaiḥsvare kara 'hari-nāma-rava'
'phalgu' āra 'yukta,' 'baddha' āra 'mukta,'
kabhu nā bhāviha, ekākāra saba

Do not in any circumstance forget two sets of opposing principles: dry, apparent renunciation versus real, appropriate renunciation, and the bound state versus the liberated condition. Never mistakenly consider these conflicting conceptions equal. Remember this and loudly chant *harināma.*

(11)

'kanaka-kāminī,' 'pratiṣṭhā-bāghinī,'
chāḍiyāche yāre, sei ta' vaiṣṇava
sei 'anāsakta,' sei 'śuddha-bhakta,'
saṁsāra tathā pāya parābhava

One who has rejected money, women, and the tigress of fame is truly a Vaiṣṇava. Factually detached from material life, he is a pure devotee who will attain victory over birth and death.

(12)

yathāyogya bhoga, nāhi tathā roga,
'anāsakta' sei, ki āra kahaba
'āsakti-rahita,' 'sambandha-sahita,'
viṣaya-samūha sakali 'mādhava'

One who partakes moderately of worldly things deemed necessary for performing *bhajana* is indeed detached and does not succumb to the disease of material infatuation. Devoid of selfish attachment and accepting everything in relation to the Lord, he perceives all sense objects as nondifferent from Mādhava.

(13)

se 'yukta-vairāgya,' tāhā ta' saubhāgya,
tāhāi jaḍete harira vaibhava
kīrtane yāhāra, 'pratiṣṭhā-sambhāra,'
tāhāra sampatti kevala 'kaitava'

That is proper renunciation, a great fortune through which Hari's glory is manifest in matter. The attainment of one who chants the Lord's name hoping to enhance his own material prestige is simply hypocrisy.

(14)

'viṣaya-mumukṣu,' 'bhogera bubhukṣu,'
du'ye tyaja mana, dui 'avaiṣṇava'
'kṛṣṇera sambandha,' aprākṛta-skandha,
kabhu nahe tāhā jaḍera sambhava

O mind, reject those seeking impersonal liberation and those desiring sense objects; both are nondevotees. Things used in relation to Kṛṣṇa belong to the transcendental realm; they are never material products (and thus can neither be owned by persons interested in mundane enjoyment nor forsaken by persons seeking renunciation of material objects).

(15)

'māyāvādī jana,' kṛṣṇetara mana,
mukta abhimāne se ninde vaiṣṇava
vaiṣṇavera dāsa, tava bhakti-āśa,
kena vā ḍākicha nirjana-āhava

The mind of a Māyāvādī is involved with matters other than Kṛṣṇa. Considering himself liberated, he criticizes Vaiṣṇavas. O mind, being a servant of the Vaiṣṇavas you should always hope to attain devotion. Why do you instead make such a pandemonium about your solitary worship?

(16)

ye 'phalgu-vairāgī,' kahe nije 'tyāgī,'
se nā pāre kabhu haite 'vaiṣṇava'
haripada chāḍi', 'nirjanatā bāḍi,'
labhiyā ki phala, 'phalgu' se vaibhava

One who artificially shuns what could be used in the Lord's service, calling himself a renunciant, can never become a Vaiṣṇava. By abandoning Hari's lotus feet and remaining in a cottage of solitude, what will he gain besides an insubstantial glory?

(17)

rādhā-dāsye rahi', chāḍi 'bhoga-ahi,'
'pratiṣṭhāśā' nahe 'kīrtana-gaurava'
'rādhā-nitya-jana,' tāhā chāḍi' mana,
kena vā nirjana-bhajana-kaitava

Remain in Śrī Rādhā's service and reject the snake of material enjoyment. The glory of *kīrtana* is not for attaining personal recognition. O mind, why have you abandoned your identity as Rādhā's eternal servant to practice the cheating of *nirjana-bhajana*?

(18)

vraja-vāsī-gaṇa, pracāraka-dhana,
pratiṣṭhā-bhikṣuka tāṅra nahe 'śava'
prāṇa āche tāṅra, sei hetu pracāra,
pratiṣṭhāśā-hīna-'kṛṣṇa-gāthā' saba

The Vraja-*vāsīs* are the wealth of preachers; they never aspire for the material reputation cherished only by the living dead. Vraja-*vāsīs* are infused with life—hence they preach, their glorification of Lord Kṛṣṇa being devoid of desire for fame.

(19)

śrī-dayita-dāsa, kīrtanete āśa,
kara uccaiḥsvare 'hari-nāma-rava'
kīrtana-prabhāve, smaraṇa svabhāve,
se kāle bhajana-nirjana sambhava

This servant of Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa always desires to glorify the Lord, and enjoins all to loudly sing the names of Lord Hari. The transcendental power of *kīrtana* automatically wakens contemplation of the Lord. Only at that stage is *nirjana-bhajana* feasible.

Three

Gauḍīya Defined

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura recognized the exoteric meaning of "Gauḍīya", which derived from the name of the former capital of Bengal—Gauḍapura (which was later called Māyāpur):[1] [*]

> Although Śrīman Mahāprabhu accepted the Mādhva *sampradāya,* the *ācāryas* of the branch of Madhva's line known as Tattva-vādīs are South Indian. Therefore the *sampradāya* in the shelter of Gaura's feet are called Gauḍīyas. Particularly Śrī Madhvācārya is also known as Śrī Gauḍa-pūrṇānanda, and therefore the devotees of Gaura may also be called Mādhva-Gauḍīyas.[2] [†]

However, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura also gave more esoteric imports. The following definition of *Gauḍīya* was featured in the *Gauḍīya:*

Śāstra: Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

Mantra: aṣṭādaśākṣara yugala mantra[‡]

Ḥṣi: Śrī Gāndharvā (Rādhārāṇī)

Upāsya (object of worship): Śrī Kṛṣṇa

Sādhana or *upakaraṇa* (means of elevation): *bhakti* as denoted by *kīrtana* is the best of all practices. Every other type of *sādhana* is included within the *bhakti* of the Gauḍīyas, which is intrinsic to the soul and pervaded by *rāga* (transcendental divine attachment).

Sādhya or *prayojana* (goal or necessity): all desired goals of pious life and all spiritual necessities are subsumed in the topmost necessity, Kṛṣṇa-*prema.*

Dhāma or *ādhāra* (spiritual abode or support): the Goloka Vṛndāvana of the *rūpānuga* Gauḍīyas is the highest of all *dhāmas.* The special manifestation of Vṛndāvana characterized by *audārya* (magnanimity) is Navadvīpa.[3]

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura further stated:

> A devotee of Viṣṇu is a Vaiṣṇava, a devotee of Kṛṣṇa is a Kārṣṇa, and a devotee of Śrī Rādhā is a Gauḍīya.[*]

> Gauḍīyas are *rūpānuga* Gaura-*bhaktas* in the shelter of *parakīya-madhura-rasa.* They are followers of Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī and are *svarūpa-rūpānuga.*

Gauḍīyas have the *mañjarī* system. Their worshipable deities are Śrī Rādhā-Madana-mohana, Śrī Rādhā-Govinda, and Śrī Rādhā-Gopīnātha:

śrī-rādhā-saha 'śrī-madana-mohana'
śrī-rādhā-saha 'śrī-govinda'-caraṇa

śrī-rādhā-saha śrīla 'śrī-gopīnātha'
ei tina ṭhākura haya 'gauḍiyāra nātha'

The Vṛndāvana deities of Madana-mohana with Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Govinda with Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and Gopīnātha with Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī are the life and soul of the Gauḍīyas. (Cc 3.20.142–43)

ei tina ṭhākura gauḍīyāke kariyāchena ātmasāt
e tinera caraṇa vandoṅ, tine mora nātha

These three deities have absorbed the heart and soul of the Gauḍīyas. I worship Their lotus feet, for They are the Lords of my heart. (Cc 1.1.19)

In the eighteen-syllable mantra chanted by Gauḍīyas, *kṛṣṇa* indicates Madana-mohana (*sambandhādhidevatā,* the deity who gives experience of our relationship), *govinda* indicates Govinda (*abhidheyādhidevatā,* the deity who assists in progressive devotional service), and *gopījanavallabha* indicates Gopīnātha (*prayojanādhidevatā,* the deity who attracts to the ultimate goal).[4]

Four

What Is the Gauḍīya Maṭha?

by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī

Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha is:

the primary trunk of the great *kalyāṇa-kalpataru* (desire tree of auspiciousness);

the imperial court that propagates the independent sovereignty wherein resides in His own form Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the transcendental *tattva* superior even to that considered best;

the charitable hospital of non-malefic mercy administered by the best of doctors—the genuine guru—along with the highly effective medicine of Kṛṣṇa-*nāma* and the complete diet of *mahā-prasāda;*

the grand temple of knowledge received by the descending system of guru-*paramparā* and pertaining to the Supreme Lord, who is beyond mundane sense perception; the censurer of the attempt to ascend the platform of knowledge by one's own experience based on sensual perception and empiricism;

demonstrating the harmony of the *pāñcarātrika* and *bhāgavata* paths;

the seat of *ekāyana* (the single path of the Vedas), namely exclusive devotion to Kṛṣṇa based on the spiritually *rasa*-saturated literature of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and in accord with tradition, based also on the specialties of diverse Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas,* scripturally ascertained philosophy, and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* Vedānta, and Sarasvatī;

the unparalleled instructor of *sevā* to the *dhāma, nāma,* and *kāma* of the fully independent Lord, Vrajendra-nandana;

the eastern mountain wherefrom the sun is seen to rise, and wherefrom emit *Śrī Sajjana-toṣaṇī, Gauḍīya,* and *Nadia Prakash,* bearers of news from the spiritual world;

in a world inundated with *ajña-rūḍhi,* the sacred place of the descent of the *vidvad-rūḍhi* of words;

the abode of service to the five best methods of *bhakti* which totally cleanse the effects of the five abodes of Kali [places of meat-eating, gambling, illicit sex, intoxication, and gold-hoarding];*

the temple resounding with the tumult of Kṛṣṇa-*nāma* within a world resounding with the

tumult of quarrel of this talkative age, Kali-yuga;

the educational institution imparting knowledge of Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti,* and Kṛṣṇa-*prema* in the divisions of *sambandha, abhidheya,* and *prayojana;*

a Vedic research laboratory for searching out the genuine reality, received by the process of hearing Vedic sounds, and which is devoid of duplicity;

the residence beyond the modes of nature for sadhus who are non-envious, non-duplicitous, and free from desires for material enjoyment, liberation, or mystic powers;

the one and only university for teaching the superhuman economics of how all endeavors should be undertaken for Kṛṣṇa's sake;

the treasure chest of the *siddhānta* of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the Six Gosvāmīs that the form, qualities, and pastimes of the Lord manifest from *nāma-bhajana,* and that *smaraṇa* is subservient to *kīrtana;*

a field ever flooded with the erudition of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya that flows in thousands of streams;

the pleasure arbor of *kīrtana* as approved by Lord Caitanya, which glorifies the pure name, form, qualities, and pastimes of the Lord;

a grand temple that forbids *phalgu-vairāgya,* and on whose imposing spire is inscribed the fundamental mantra upholding *yukta-vairāgya;*

the place of worship for the servants of the *āśraya-jāti* (Śrī Rādhā, or the guru) who are in the shelter of Śrī Brahmā, Nārada, Vyāsa, Madhva, and Nityānanda Prabhu.

Five

The Gauḍīya Maṭha: Its Message and Activities

From the inaugural English edition of the Harmonist *(25.1; June 1927)*

By the grace of the Lord of the Gauḍīyas, the message of the Gauḍīya Maṭha is today not unknown to any one of the whole of Gauḍa-*deśa*. And not in Gauḍa-*deśa* only, but over Naimiṣāraṇya, Ayodhyā, Prayāga, Kāśī, Śrī Vṛndāvana, and Mathurā, on one side, and also over Dākṣiṇātya and everywhere throughout the tracts of Orissa, on the other, has been well proclaimed the message of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, the principal branch of the Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, which is the root implanted in the soil of the advent of Śrīman Mahāprabhu in Śrī Māyāpur-Navadvīpa-*dhāma*.* Over Gauḍa-*maṇḍala,* Kṣetra-*maṇḍala,* and Vraja-*maṇḍala* the message of the Gauḍīya Maṭha has gone forth.

The truth (*satya*) is propagated in a twofold way, viz., positively, by the method of direct support, and negatively, by the method of opposition. The truth cannot be made sufficiently known by the positive method alone. Propaganda by the method of opposition, more than the presentation of the positive aspect, brings about more brilliantly in this world the appearance and glorification of the truth.

In Satya-yuga, Hiraṇyakaśipu, more than Prahlāda, by the adoption of the method of negative propaganda proclaimed greatly the glory of Nṛsiṁha-deva. In Tretā-yuga, Rāvaṇa, more than Hanumān, proclaimed the greatness of Śrī Rāmacandra to the world. In Dvāpara-yuga, more than the Pāṇḍavas, Yādavas, and other devotees, Kaṁsa, Jarāsandha, Śiśupāla and the rest, as antagonists, proclaimed the greatness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In Kali-yuga, Jagāi, Mādhāi, Chand Kazi, Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī (the professor of Māyāvāda), Rāmacandra Khān (the hater of Viṣṇu and the Vaiṣṇavas), Rāmacandra Purī, and in later times the various hypocrite sects, more than the *bhaktas* of Gaura, have proclaimed the greatness of Gaura and Nityānanda to the world by adopting the hostile method. In all ages the truth is propagated in this world by the positive and negative methods. The true message of the Gauḍīya Maṭha has spread and is spreading in the world in this manner.

It may be asked: What does the Gauḍīya Maṭha do? Is the Gauḍīya Maṭha merely one other association like the thousands of sects that are to be found in this world? Or is the Gauḍīya Maṭha one among the other welfare societies of the world? Or is the Gauḍīya Maṭha one of the many mischievous organizations that carry on their activities in this world? What work does the Gauḍīya Maṭha do for the benefit of the world? Is the Gauḍīya Maṭha affectionate like a mother, a protector like a father, or a helper like a brother? What good does the Gauḍīya Maṭha do to the world? What wellbeing of society does it desire? What very service does it render to mankind that the civilized world, or the whole of mankind, should listen to its message? Many such questions may arise in our minds.

The Gauḍīya Maṭha is not an association like the thousands of sects. The Gauḍīya Maṭha is not desirous of the welfare or non-welfare of the world, like other benefit- or mischief-making societies. The Gauḍīya Maṭha does not do work that is beneficial or harmful in terms of worldly enjoyments. The Gauḍīya Maṭha is neither affectionate nor cruel like a worldly mother, neither protector nor destroyer like a worldly father, neither helper nor enemy like a worldly brother. What then is this Gauḍīya Maṭha, that the world should listen to its words?

There need be no want of harmony between the Gauḍīya Maṭha and the whole world, as the only disharmony is caused by one little word. The Gauḍīya Maṭha says that harmony between itself and the whole world can be established by means of one word, viz., that the duty of all *jīvas* consists in the exclusive service of the *adhokṣaja,* the transcendent. The majority of the people of this world say that the service of the *akṣaja,* i.e., the phenomenal, is the duty of every one of the *jīvas*. Even when this is not actually said by word of mouth, it is always done in practice. The Gauḍīya Maṭha says that that which is the object of our activities (*sādhya*) should itself be the only means (*sādhana*) for the attainment of the object. In the opinion of the majority of men of the world, *sādhya* and *sādhana* are different, one from the other. The Gauḍīya Maṭha says that words like *unity, universal love,* et cetera, so long as one continues to be under the influence of the physical and mental dharma, are mere sounds, like such words as *ākāśa-kusuma* (aerial flower), et cetera. Harmony is possible only when one has obtained a firm footing in the dharma, or function, of the soul.

This distinction requires to be made perfectly clear. The service of the *adhokṣaja* means the service of the transcendental Godhead. That which helps or hinders the gratification of the body or the mind is not the service of the *adhokṣaja;* it is the service of the *akṣaja,* the material. The body is pleased by the enjoyment of free air, by gazing at the open sky. The troublesome mind is gratified if it is allowed to roam at will like an unbridled horse, to revel in the beauties of nature, and to gather honey from the many-tinted flowerage of the groves of posy. The contrary of this, the neutralizationists' point of view, is based upon repugnance of all gratification. Neither of these is service of the *adhokṣaja;* both are service of the *akṣaja*.

The majority of the people of the world, although they profess to be positivists, fail to see, although it must be quite patent, the greatest of all the phenomena. They at any rate forget it in practice even when they appear to know. The greatest of the positivists, like Cārvāka, although he could not but have observed this greatest of all the phenomena, failed to take notice of it. That great phenomenon is generally known by the name of death.

If the memory of this great event is retained in our minds we would assuredly be solicitous for the *amṛta* (deathlessness). The *śruti* says we are all children of the *amṛta,* heirs of the *amṛta:*

> *śṛṇvantu viśve amṛtasya putrāḥ*
>
> Listen ye, children of the *amṛta.* (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 2.5)

In this world there are found two kinds of endeavor for obtaining this *amṛta.* Like unto the sons

of kings of the epochs recorded in history, some try to ascend the throne of their father by treason against the father. On the other hand, loyal sons, in seeking to be heirs of a kindhearted and affectionate father, look upon constant service as being both the means and the end. The Gauḍīya Maṭha understands the latter to be the appropriate and eternal method. Why is it appropriate? Because:

śṛṇvatāṁ sva-kathāḥ kṛṣṇaḥ puṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtanaḥ
hṛdy antaḥ-stho hy abhadrāṇi vidhunoti suhṛt satām

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the tidings of whom whosoever listens to or sings is sanctified, the benefactor of all holy persons, appearing in the hearts of all who listen to the accounts of Himself, destroys the evil propensities of their hearts to the very root. (SB 1.2.17)

This seed of sin, i.e., sinful desire or ignorance (*avidyā*), is the cause of the worldly sojourn of the *jīva*. Why is the method eternal? Because:

bhejire munayo 'thāgre bhagavantam adhokṣajam

In the beginning the *munis* worshiped the *adhokṣaja* Bhagavān (the transcendental God in His plenitude) in this way. (SB 1.2.25)

That type of kindness which does not give rise to *manda* (evil) is termed *amandodayā dayā*.[1] As for example, if a sick man is allowed to eat tamarind or a drunkard is helped to proceed to a liquor shop, kindness is indeed shown, but in the sequel it turns out to be productive of harm to the recipient of kindness. If the sick man is placed under medical treatment against his will and inclination, if the drunkard is protected from his evil course, *amandodayā dayā* (non–harm-producing kindness), is shown. Preventing floods and famines, nursing the sick, pleasing or displeasing anybody, or stultifying the faculty of consciousness of anyone, i.e., promoting voidism—every one of these is an instance of *mandodayā dayā* (harm-producing kindness).

Man cannot understand it till he realizes his true position. By such acts the *jīva* is not really benefited. Cutting the root of misery is doing real good to others. The treatment that allows the gangrene of sensual desires to remain does no real good to the patient, neither is it proof of great wisdom, out of spite to the gangrene of sensual desires, to hang the sick man, holding out the prospect of *mukti* (annihilation) as a complete and permanent cure.

svayaṁ niḥśreyasaṁ vidvān na vakty ajñāya karma hi
na rāti rogiṇo 'pathyaṁ vāñchato 'pi bhiṣaktamaḥ

Just as the best physician does not allow the patient to take unwholesome food even if he evinces a desire for it, in like manner he who is himself aware of *niḥśreyaḥ* (the highest good) never advises an ignorant person to do *karma* (work for his own interest). (SB 6.9.50)

The *śruti* says:

> *avidyāyāṁ bahudhā vartamānā*
> *vayaṁ kṛtārthā ity abhimanyanti bālāḥ*
> *yat karmiṇo na pravedayanti rāgāt*
> *tenāturāḥ kṣīṇa-lokāś cyavante*
>
> Ignorant persons, being themselves in the midst of manifold *avidyā* (errors), think thus: "We have gained what we want." Because they work for their own interest they have no experience of the real truth, by reason of their attachment to such work. With extreme solicitude they gain little as the result of their activities. After a time they fall from that position. (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.2.9)

The *śruti* further says:

> *avidyāyām antare vartamānāḥ*
> *svayaṁ dhīrāḥ paṇḍitaṁ manyamānāḥ*
> *jaṅghanyamānāḥ pariyanti mūḍhā*
> *andhenaiva nīyamānāḥ yathāndhāḥ*
>
> Those who despite remaining in the midst of ignorance consider themselves conscientious and enlightened—such perverted and ignorant men come to grief like the blind man led by the blind. (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.2.8)

Most people of the world, forgetful of their own home under the spell of the enchantress, are running headlong in the opposite direction. In this performance, again their intoxication, eagerness, concentration, and firm determination are so intense that they have indeed very little opportunity to think about home. But the voice of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, the flying red-tinted banner of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, arresting the ears and eyes of all persons, is ever proclaiming:

> *'kṛṣṇa' bolo, saṅge calo, ei-mātra bhikṣā cāi*
>
> Say 'Kṛṣṇa,' come along; this is the only alms we beg. (*Gītāvalī*)

"Back to God, and back to home" is the message of Gauḍīya Maṭha. To arrest the perverted current tide and redirect it toward the eternal source is the seemingly unpleasant duty of the Gauḍīya Maṭha. The Gauḍīya Maṭha says:

> All men of the world without exception are our kin; all birds and beasts, grass and shrubs, are our kindred. Whatsoever conscious being, wheresoever existing, belongs to our Supreme Lord. We shall conduct our kindred from out of the spells of the enchantress toward home. We shall not be showing, for the time being, sweet sympathy for them, by enabling those who have fallen into the snares of the enchantress to get more deeply entangled. Even if under the spell of the enchantress they fill heaven and earth with their

loud protestations against our endeavors, we will still proclaim the message of the *amṛta* to them.

Even if it be contrary to the current of thought of the religious or religiously-minded people, as that term is understood by the world, or appear strange or wonderful to them, we will still forever practice and proclaim those religious works, the *sanātana-dharma* made by God, the tidings of which are unknown to any of the *ṛṣis,* gods, *siddhas,* and men; the dharma which, although it happens to be hidden, pure, and difficult to understand, alone enables us to attain the *amṛta;* the dharma that is the supreme dharma of the *jīva,* and to which all *jīvas* without exception have a claim; the dharma to which everyone in the universe may become the heir. That dharma is the object, as well as the method, of our endeavors.

The current that is sweeping the world, the flood on which it is adrift, the famine by which it is distressed, the want, fear, sorrow, and delusion by which it is mastered, oppressed, and tortured, can be prevented, can be pulled up by the root, by the method of moving homeward for self-surrender at the holy feet of the sorrowless and fearless *amṛta*. So long as we shall stay in the foreign land, or the greater the distance and speed with which we shall continue to run toward foreign lands and away from the direction of home, so long and to the same extent sorrow, fear, and delusion will not leave us; they will on the contrary mock us, like the delusive deer, by their further and steady increase. The *śruti* says:

dvitīyād vai bhayaṁ bhavati

Fear must result from the perception of a second entity, different from Godhead. (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad*)

Death cannot be abolished from this mundane world. By no amount of efforts of the united *jīvas* of the whole universe can the threefold miseries be banished to the Andamans. No one can extinguish the fire of Rāvaṇa's funeral pyre. Only the well that has been cooled by contact with the feet of Śrī Rāmacandra has the power to quench it. Once the world is fairly embarked on the high tide of the holy name, the insignificant worldly flood retires forthwith. If the alms of glorification, the songs of Hari, become easily procurable, the little famines will leave us for good, as a mere attendant result.

With the appearance of sorrow-delusion-fear-killing *bhakti* (devotional faith), *avidyā,* the root of every form of misery of the *jīva,* is destroyed and the soul well satisfied. *Bhakti* is like fire. Nothing else can purify gold in the manner that fire can. Without *bhakti-yoga* other forms of effort are meaningless, like the attempt to refine gold by the application of tamarind, earth, or ashes.

To imagine *artha-vāda* in regard to the holy name, or in other words, to imagine that the glorification of the name is mere exaggeration of praise, is that godless intellectual attitude which gives rise to our belief in other tangible forms of effort. We think that the work of

glorification, preaching, et cetera, of the name of Hari is not conducive to the general good. Or again, we may sometimes think that the glorification and preaching of the name is on a level with other kinds of effort—the first being *artha-vāda* in regard to the name, the second being the *aparādha* of believing other good works to be equal to the name. To have faith in the holy name is so very rare that we may leave it out of consideration. If we had faith even in *nāmābhāsa* (the most dimly perceived name), we would never have said that succoring the victims of floods is better than *kīrtana* and *pracāra* (singing and preaching about God), or that freeing the country from famines, or the opening of hospitals, is better than preaching devotion to God. Hundreds of famines can be alleviated not only by *nāmābhāsa* but even by *nāmāparādha* (offensive taking of the name). The *mukti* that is not obtained in crores of births by *brahma-jñāna* (knowledge of Brahman) can be had by one single *nāmābhāsa.* This is no exaggeration. This alone is the only true message. Śrī Gaurasundara, the savior of Kali-yuga and the *avatārī* (the source of incarnations), by means of the *nāmācārya* (the teacher of the name by his own personal example), Śrī Ṭhākura Haridāsa, has borne testimony to it.

Neither Caitanya-deva nor any of His devotees adopted the Jain view aggravated by the bad logic of purveyors of vulgar news, and thus they were never in a hurry to prevent flood or famine or to found hospitals, nor did they give any other advice to anyone, except telling all men at all times and places:

nāma vinu kali-kāle nāhi āra dharma

In Kali-yuga there is no other dharma except uttering the name of Kṛṣṇa. (Cc 1.7.74)

khāite śuite yathā tathā nāma laya
kāla-deśa-niyama nāhi, sarva siddhi haya

Taking the name in whatever place—whether eating or sleeping, irrespective of time, place, or person—all is fulfilled. (Cc 3.20.18)

yāre dekha, tāre kaha 'kṛṣṇa'-upadeśa
āmāra ājñāya guru haña tāra' ei deśa

Whomsoever you meet, instruct him about Kṛṣṇa. By My command, being guru, save this land. (Cc 2.7.128)

ucca saṅkīrtana tāte karilā pracāra
sthira-cara jīvera saba khaṇḍāilā saṁsāra

Thou did loudly proclaim *saṅkīrtana* and cancel the worldly course of *jīvas* both moving and motionless. (Cc 3.3.76)

bhārata-bhūmite haila manuṣya-janma yāra
janma sārthaka kari' kara para-upakāra

> Ye that are born as men in the land of Bhārata, having attained the human form of life, do good unto others. (Cc 1.9.41)

There is no other dharma of the *jīva* except *kīrtana* (singing of God's glories). To the extent that one disbelieves in *bhakti* as denoted by *kīrtana,* or the holy name—in other words, those who think that all wants cannot be fulfilled by *kīrtana*—to that extent such people are *nāstika* (atheists). The degree of help one gives toward propagating *bhakti* as denoted by *kīrtana* is the sole measure of one's belief in God. On the other hand, a man is a *nāstika* (disbeliever) to the extent that he obstructs *kīrtana.* As the name has to be taken every moment, even while eating or sleeping, as *bhakti* denoted by *kīrtana* is the only dharma of the *jīva,* as there is no other dharma except this, then where is time for alleviating flood or famine, or founding hospitals? Those who, claiming to be positivists, are forgetful of the greatest of all facts, viz. death, those who, being fallen like the blind man led by the blind, under the spell of the enchantress loiter about like travelers without an objective—such people have time for work other than Hari-*kīrtana.* All efforts except Hari-*kīrtana* are the cause of *saṁsāra* (the worldly sojourn), the road leading not to the east but in the opposite direction. On the other hand, continual performance of Hari-*kīrtana* is the turning away from every other direction to face east, or the journey homeward.

The Gauḍīya Maṭha is the missionary of this constant *kīrtana.* The Gauḍīya Maṭha does not ask to destroy all efforts of the world, but to deflect their course. The Gauḍīya Maṭha begs every one of us to offer his all to Kṛṣṇa. The *dhumdhām* (pomp and display) of the Gauḍīya Maṭha is solely for making Kṛṣṇa the goal of all efforts of the world. The offering to Kṛṣṇa comes first, and after the offering has been made, *bhakti* begins. The Gauḍīya Maṭha says, "Make the offering to Kṛṣṇa first, and after that has been done, profess to be a *bhakta* (devotee)."

The Gauḍīya Maṭha says, "Do not imitate the *kīrtana-kārī* (one who performs *kīrtana*)." *Òhaṅga* (burlesque) is the other name of *anukaraṇa* (imitation). By arraying oneself in the trappings of *ḍhaṅga* or *shaṅga* (harlequin), people can be deceived, but no good is done either to oneself or to others. Those who follow the *kīrtana-kārī* are actual self-benefactors, properly awake to their self-interest, and are also benefactors of others, or mindful of others' interests. They are not blinded by considerations of undue personal advantages, nor do they cheat others, and are therefore truly disinterested. It is by *kīrtana* alone that the claims of self-interests of others, and disinterestedness, are simultaneously satisfied.

Bhoga (enjoyment) or *mukti* (freedom from misery) in the shape of prevention of famines, et cetera, is gained by *nāmāparādha* or by *nāmābhāsa.* That by which crores-of-times greater eternal good is produced, whereby the lotus of the eternal wellbeing of the *jīva* blossoms forth —that Śrī Nāma (holy name) the Gauḍīya Maṭha endeavors to give away freely. They are earnestly trying to give away freely Kṛṣṇa Himself.

In this world there are many persons who spread unwholesome doctrines after advertising their intention to give good advice. But most men are deceived by the idea that pleasurable experience of the moment is the actual good. From Sanātana-*śikṣā* (instruction to Sanātana):

‘ke āmi’, ‘kene āmāya jāre tāpa-traya’
ihā nāhi jāni—‘kemane hita haya’

Who am I, and why doth the threefold misery afflict me?

I do not know how benefit can be. (Cc 2.20.102)

In answer to the question “How can there be benefit?” the message that Gaurasundara, the expounder of the *sanātana-dharma* (traditional religion), delivered to us regarding the only means of obtaining that benefit is: *bhakti.* If this message had once reached our ears we would not have considered *bhakti* denoted by *kīrtana* as weak and other methods as strong. Having turned our face away from the direction in which the treasure would easily have been found, we would not have hurried toward the south for the bite of wasps, toward the west for the terrors of the Yakṣa, the demon that guards worldly riches, or toward the north for offering our lives to the fangs of the black snake.[*]

Our home is eastward, but we are running with all speed away from the east, toward other points of the compass. And when the people of the east call out to us to turn back, deluded by the mirage we say, “We will not listen to you. See what beautiful lakes full of the cleanest water lie yonder, before our very eyes!” Talking thus, and being by degrees enamoured of that which only appears to our senses, i.e., a mirage, we are ever moving away from home toward foreign lands. As such, the doings of the Gauḍīya Maṭha occasionally seem to us and to those who are like-minded to be contrary to our ideas. This is likely and need not cause any surprise. But all this notwithstanding, the Gauḍīya Maṭha, bearing its message with its bright flag flying, emblazoning on it the words that attract our ears and eyes, is ever saying:

neha yat karma dharmāya na virāgāya kalpate
na tīrtha-pada-sevāyai jīvann api mṛto hi saḥ

evaṁ nṛṇāṁ kriyā-yogāḥ sarve saṁsṛti-hetavaḥ
ta evātma-vināśāya kalpante kalpitāḥ pare

yad atra kriyate karma bhagavat-paritoṣaṇam
jñānaṁ yat tad adhīnaṁ hi bhakti-yoga-samanvitam

Work that is not done for the sake of dharma, dharma that is not performed for the purpose of *vairāgya, vairāgya* that is not practiced for service to Viṣṇu—whosoever practices such work, dharma, or *vairāgya* is dead in life. The *naimittika* (conditional) *kāmya-karmas* (fruitive works) are the cause of *saṁsāra-bandhana* (bondage to the world) or *yoni-bhramaṇa* (birth journeys). But those very works, if they are done for Godhead, have the power to destroy ungodliness. The *bhāgavata-jñāna* (divine knowledge) associated with *bhakti* denoted by *śravaṇa, kīrtana,* et cetera, is assuredly the unswerving fruit of works that are performed in this world for pleasing God. (SB 3.23.56, 1.5.34–35)

This is the subject of the propaganda of the Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha. The Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha by its practice proclaims that without the gratification of the senses of Godhead, by the gratification of the senses of the *jīva,* no real good can accrue either to oneself or to others. By invocation of *mukti,* in deprecation of the pleasures of the senses of the *jīva,* God is not served. There are many hypocrite sects who counterfeit *bhakti,* by assuming the paraphernalia of the false devotee, but are not aware that *bhakti* is an impulse of the soul. Of these, some for the purpose of filling their bellies, some for fame, or some by imitating some other purpose, serve to delude the people.

The Gauḍīya Maṭha says that in the name of dharma it is not proper to practice trade. Not using Hari to serve our own pleasures, our duty is only to serve Śrī Hari. The Gauḍīya Maṭha says that imitating the devotee of Hari, or putting on the dress of Nārada, as in a theatrical performance, is far from walking after the devotee of Hari or following Nārada. The delightful tune, time, and cadence alone do not constitute the Hari-*kīrtana* of the Gauḍīya Maṭha; those are found even in the performances of the gramophone or harlots. *Cetanā* (consciousness) is necessary, and simultaneous practice and preaching is necessary. The Gauḍīya Maṭha says that he who does not possess pure character is not fit even to be styled a man, not to speak of being regarded as religious (*dhārmika*).

The Gauḍīya Maṭha keeps at a distance from the five *kali-sthānas* (abodes of quarrel). The *kali-sthānas,* according to a text of the *Bhāgavatam,* are the following:

dissipating games, such as cards, dice, et cetera; trade, or the profession of a trader, in the name of dharma;

indulgence in luxuries such as betel, tobacco, wines, et cetera;

improper association with woman or unusual addiction to one's own wife;

animal slaughter; to not proclaim the truth to people, but to deceive them by untruth; not to preach Hari-*kathā* to the *jīva,* and in lieu of Hari-*kathā,* to give other kinds of advice;

by cheating people, or by accepting money that is earned by their labor; to apply such wealth to the maintenance of wife and children or for increasing the scope of one's own enjoyment; not to employ everything—the body, mind, and speech of the *jīva;* the life, wealth, and intellect—in service to Śrī Viṣṇu, who is the proprietor of all things, and the Supreme Lord of all wealth.

The *śāstra* says that of all things the human body is the dearest to God. The human body is the giver of the *paramārtha* (highest good) and is very difficult to obtain. Therefore, while this body lasts, without being immersed in any other thing, not deceiving ourselves by thinking that any other method except sorrow-stupor-fear-killing *bhakti* is productive of good, it is our duty to unceasingly practice devotion. Other forms of devotion to God are weak; the devotion denoted by *kīrtana* is strong. Once the protection of the strong *bhakti* is secured it gives to *jīvas*

the highest good, with little effort on their part. Therefore by preaching *kīrtana* at all times, to induce by right of the highest kinship all *jīvas* to turn homeward, is true universal love, true help of others, true kindness, and the true duty of life. The Gauḍīya Maṭha, embracing without exception all inhabitants of the universe, in sadness calling upon all to turn their face toward God to be preachers of this *bhakti* denoted by *kīrtana,* says:

he sādhavaḥ sakalam eva vihāya dūrāc
caitanya-candra-caraṇe kurutānurāgam

Ye, O righteous, bidding goodbye to everything from a distance, offer the devotion of your hearts to the feet of Caitanya-candra. (*Caitanya-candrāmṛta*)

Six

Is Gauḍīya Maṭha the Only Way?

In 1935 in Delhi a young man asked, "Is it not possible to serve Hari while maintaining conclusions other than those of the Gauḍīya Maṭha?" Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī responded with a four-hour discourse, extracts from which follow.[1]

Do you think there can be any method to approach God other than associating with those whom Godhead Himself has engaged in His service? Those who want *dharma-artha-kāma-mokṣa* are not servants. They are not servants who make a pretense of service but are busy trying to make the object of service [Kṛṣṇa] the servant of their own sense pleasure. How can one perform service in the association of such people?

> *matir na kṛṣṇe parataḥ svato vā mitho 'bhipadyeta gṛha-vratānām*
> *adānta-gobhir viśatāṁ tamisraṁ punaḥ punaś carvita-carvaṇānām*
>
> Because of their uncontrolled senses, persons too addicted to materialistic life make progress toward hellish conditions and repeatedly chew the already chewed. Their inclinations toward Kṛṣṇa are never aroused, either by the instructions of others, their own efforts, or a combination of both. (SB 7.5.30)

Hence the *Bhāgavatam* states:

> *tato duḥsaṅgam utsṛjya satsu sajjeta buddhimān*
> *santa evāsya chindanti mano-vyāsaṅgam uktibhiḥ*
>
> An intelligent person should reject all bad association and instead associate with saintly devotees, whose words cut off the excessive attachment within one's mind. (SB 11.26.26)

The sadhu must be twenty-four hours out of twenty-four in touch with the absolute. At present the Gauḍīya Maṭha is calling all people to become subscribers to Hari-*kīrtana.* Whatever they perceive through the eyes, nose, ears, or other senses should be employed neither for enjoyment nor renunciation. Let them be utilized fully in service to Hari-*kīrtana.* The Gauḍīya Maṭha wants to speak this message.

When all of our actions and inclinations are engaged in pleasing the senses of Viṣṇu, that is conducive to service. When service is directed toward others, in the form of *dharma-artha-kāma-mokṣa,* that is opposed to service and is atheistic. That atheism takes multi-forms such as altruism, positivism, utilitarianism, and pantheism. Such bad association should be wholly given up. The Gauḍīya Maṭha is providing refuge to all of humankind, from now till the end of creation, from those who disguise bad association as good association or auspiciousness and thus cheat people. The Maṭha does not have time to give other insignificant types of relief. It

does not perform earthquake or flood relief or get unprotected girls married, for it has recognized that the world is not a permanent place. The Gauḍīya Maṭha has seen by the rule of three that in comparison to eternal life, existence in this world is but a few years, many of which can pass simply in eating and other activities of bodily maintenance.[*] The Gauḍīya Maṭha people have understood that their first duty is to give relief from all obstacles on the path of human beings' eternal life.

The outlook of a *para-duḥkha-duḥkhī* sadhu is that not even one person should flee from the kingdom of service. Just as a veterinary surgeon forces open the mouth of a horse and chucks in medicine, so the Gauḍīya Maṭha attempts to clear the gullets of persons of animal consciousness, i.e., those inimical to Hari-*sevā,* to insert the medication of Hari-*kathā:*

vairāgya-yug-bhakti-rasaṁ prayatnair
apāyayan mām anabhīpsum andham
kṛpāmbudhir yaḥ para-duḥkha-duḥkhī
sanātanas taṁ prabhum āśrayāmi

I was unwilling to drink the *rasa* of *bhakti* possessed of renunciation, yet out of his causeless mercy Sanātana Gosvāmī forced me to drink it, even though I was blind and otherwise unable to do so. He is an ocean of mercy, who feels unhappiness in the distress of others. I take shelter of that *prabhu*.[2]

Sanātana-dharma means to distribute *bhakti-rasa* linked with renunciation. All types of *sanātana-dharma* that have recently arisen are all non-Vedic dharma—*karma-kāṇḍa* or *jñāna-kāṇḍa*—concerned with the body or mind.

One must be compassionate toward others' suffering. Leaving aside the world full of our relatives, we cannot merely work for our personal benefit alone. Gauḍīya Maṭha is not, like some other institutions, dedicated to misconceived self-interest. It is not a *dharma-artha-kāma-mokṣa* institution or one of pretentious devotion. Gauḍīya Maṭha did not appear to give temporary or partial assistance to a localized social problem, but to give full benefit to all of society. For this reason, the Gauḍīya Maṭha so firmly sticks to its words and cannot participate in others' factions. It cannot become one of the hodgepodge or cheap, falsely devotional groups, simply for entertaining the public. Mahāprabhu taught:

harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā

In Kali-yuga there is no other means, no other means, no other means for self-realization than chanting the holy name, chanting the holy name, chanting the holy name of Hari. (*Bṛhan-nāradīya Purāṇa* 38.126)

It can be said that there are alternatives to *harināma,* but there is no alternative. To imagine some alternative is the worldly way of thinking. Those who think that *harināma* chanters are

just another band, or that hearing and chanting *harināma* is not the only path, are trying to measure the nonmaterial. They are the party of measurers, or the party of *māyā,* the *sampradāya* of nondevotees.

Let all people know the teachings of Mahāprabhu Caitanya-deva. If we become overpowered by the worldly way of thinking, conforming to the mold of nationalism, we will simply chew their cud. If one man becomes good, he alone can save the whole universe:

> *brahmāṇḍa tārite śakti dhare jane jane*
>
> Each and every one of the devotees of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu can deliver the entire universe.[3]

Everyone hears about Mussolini and Hitler, who are just individuals, but a real Vaiṣṇava is not like that. His help is not simply talk of various proposals; it is real, complete, eternal help. I know of no place other than Gauḍīya Maṭha where the absolute truth is discussed. If there is, it will be incorporated into the Gauḍīya Maṭha. In this world there are many representations that appear to be truth, yet they are not actual truth. Unending auspiciousness will arise only by accepting *vaikuṇṭha-nāma:*

> *vaikuṇṭha-nāma-grahaṇam aśeṣāgha-haraṁ viduḥ*
>
> Learned transcendentalists know that by chanting the holy name of the Lord, one is freed from the reactions of unlimited sins. (SB 6.2.14)[*]

Seven

The Ācārya's Unequalled and Unsurpassed Greatness

*A translation of "Ācāryera Asamordhva Mahattva" (*Gauḍīya *6.28–33*)

Many people think that the path of *bhakti* is covered with a soft bed of flowers. Blind faith, indiscipline, whimsical behavior, indiscrimination, sentimentalism, and emotional outbursts are all counted by them as being means of performing *bhakti.* But from *śāstra* and from the words of the *ācāryas* it is understood that, although the authorized path of *bhakti* is the only means of attaining the ultimate goal of life, it is full of thorns. Especially in this Age of Kali, the age of argumentation and quarrel, it is covered with millions of thorns.

The God-sent *ācāryas,* who are oceans of causeless mercy, at the very outset warn those who are desirous of entering the path of *bhakti* about the millions of obstacles they will surely encounter, so that these travelers on the path of *bhakti* can safely and without hindrance reach the desire tree of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet and relish the fruit of *prema.* Such easily obtainable benevolence of the *ācāryas* is testimony to their liberal bestowal of non-malefic mercy upon the *jīvas.*

Despite knowing that one's hands may get injured while uprooting thorny bushes, and that envious creatures like snakes residing in the bushes might bite, one engaged in such work does not lose enthusiasm for performing his duty; rather, so that travelers will not be harmed or inconvenienced by thorns and envious creatures, his endeavor and enthusiasm for removing all the thorns will progressively increase. Similarly, increasing enthusiasm for removing millions of thorns on the path of *bhakti* is always seen in the character of an *ācārya.*

Those who are selfish, desirous of their own happiness, overcome by sloth, or afraid of *adhārmika* people, withdraw due to the shouting of nondevotees. Or they think, "When I require my own self-interest, prestige, or personal happiness, why should I have to endure various conflicts by acting for others' benefit? What is the necessity of hearing the abuse of nondevotees?" Another class of persons think that by becoming *nirjana-bhajanānandīs* they will suffer none of this trouble and will not have to hear the reproaches of others. But a *para-duḥkha-duḥkhī ācārya* is not selfish, idle, or simply desirous of his personal happiness. He is not afraid of others. He says:

> Even if hundreds and hundreds of people—or even if all the godless people of the innumerable universes assemble and in one voice shout at me, I will accept it and loudly declare the actual truth. If the topics of reality enter the ears of even a single person among millions of people from millions of universes who are completely averse to Kṛṣṇa, and thus remove the contamination of the cheating propensity from his heart, then I will

understand that I have been able to serve Mahāprabhu's *mano-'bhīṣṭa*—because I know that all the *jīvas* within the innumerable universes are coming and going because of their aversion to Kṛṣṇa. Therefore all *jīvas* within the universe, beginning from Brahmā, are averse to the Supreme Absolute Truth. Hence not everyone will listen to the discussion about the truth. It is sufficient if even among a crore of *jīvas* we can find one who is interested in hearing the truth. That *jīva* can then become situated in the truth and preach the truth to others. Probably this is why Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda said, "A preacher effects more benefit for the world than all those who become indifferent to preaching work because of their preferring to remain absorbed in the bliss of their own *bhajana*."[1]

All within the universe who have preached the truth have had to endure the campaign against the truth within a society predominated by people who are averse to Kṛṣṇa, are blinded by their own immoral selfishness, or are simply envious. Those who are fond of idleness and endeavor only for their own happiness, having accepted *gaḍḍālikā-pravāha-nyāya* (the maxim of following like sheep), embrace the dharma of traveling up and down within the universe, considering that to be thornless. Observing that everyone in the universe, from Brahmā down to a clump of grass, is wholly averse to Kṛṣṇa, some become disheartened at the prospect of such averse peoples' welfare and thus adopt an attitude of nonchalance toward them and remain absorbed in the bliss of their own *bhajana.* There is another class—that of extremely inactive people, the *sampradāya* of bluffers who cheat themselves and others for the sake of honor and easy living, who imitate genuine *bhajanānandīs.* Among these three categories, the first and third are completely duplicitous, desirous of their own happiness, and afraid of *adhārmika* people. In other words, they pose as spiritualists while remaining within the society of persons averse to Kṛṣṇa and consider the favor of such persons their ultimate need and success. Such persons who aspire to be liked by ordinary people never have to tolerate any kind of backlash from them. Subscribing to *antaḥ śākto bahiḥ śaivaḥ sabhāyāṁ vaiṣṇavo mataḥ*—internally adhering to *śākta* philosophy, externally to Śaiva doctrine, and to the Vaiṣṇava view when in an assembly—they are dependent on public favor and remain busy in procuring women and money.[*]

Therefore, just as smoking might be praised in the society of drunkards, so in a godless society or in the newspaper columns presented by godless people, glorification is heard of these two types—namely, those who desire personal happiness, who accept the dharma of coming and going [birth and death], and who make a business of the holy name, mantras, and recitation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* and others like them; and the so-called *niṣkiñcana* devotees who imitate *paramahaṁsa* Vaiṣṇavas. In the second above-mentioned category, there are one or two real *niṣkiñcana paramahaṁsa* Vaiṣṇavas (such as Śrīla Vaṁśīdāsa Bābājī Mahārāja of Kuliyā), who, having bade farewell to all material affairs, are not reckoned by envious persons to be partakers of their paraphernalia for self-enjoyment; moreover, being aloof from society, they are considered incapable of cunningness by such envious persons, who thus (as if out of kindness) do not criticize them.

But unlike those of the first two categories, an *ācārya* does not expect favor from godless

people, and unlike the last-mentioned category of *bhajanānandī* Vaiṣṇava, he does not remain simply absorbed in *sva-bhajana* (his own *bhajana*). Rather, following *svabhajana-vibhajana-prayojanāvatārī* (the origin of all avatars, who showed the highest goal to be *bhajana* in separation) Śrī Gaurasundara, he lives and acts within the world for the benefit of the world, and thus to the naturally envious vision of godless persons he appears fallen.

Hence all preachers of the truth are either seen or heard of by ordinary people as examples of being tortured by the society of people opposed to Viṣṇu. But factually, Viṣṇu and the Vaiṣṇavas are situated beyond material nature and thus cannot be touched by the enviousness of people within the material nature, just as Rāvaṇa could abduct only an illusory form of Sītā.

Although Prahlāda was a *nitya-siddha* devotee of Lord Viṣṇu, as long as he did not take the position of a preacher he was the cynosure of the eyes of the king of the demons (Hiraṇyakaśipu) and of the whole society of demons, like a garland on their neck or the treasure of their heart, and was the object of their regard, care, affection, parental inclination, and glorification. But from the very day he began to boldly preach the truth to the king of the demons—namely, one-pointed Viṣṇu-*bhakti,* the forgoing of family-based dharma to accept the necessity of Hari-*bhajana,* the uselessness of materialistic family gurus, and service to *paramahaṁsas*—and began to preach to his classmates the need to renounce the association of family-based demons and to accept Hari-*bhajana,* from that day forth the number of his enemies steadily increased.

The mundane relationship between a father and son is so strong that, out of illusion, a father sees a black-complexioned son to be as bright as molten gold, a one-eyed son to be lotus-eyed, or a disgraced son, even if he has hundreds of faults, to be the ornament of his dynasty—to the father's illusioned vision each appears to possess good qualities. In the same way, Prahlāda's preaching of the truth became counted as a great fault by his bewildered father, who then proceeded to obstruct in hundreds of ways the same son who was dearer to him than his life.

Has anyone ever heard of an instance wherein for his own self-interest a father cast his beautiful five-year-old son—who is dearer to him than his own life, who has not married and then disregarded him due to the influence of a wife, or who has not, like Emperor Aurangzeb, become his father's enemy due to greed for his kingdom—under the feet of an intoxicated elephant, threw him from a hilltop, placed him in a blazing fire, and administered poison to him? Prahlāda's fault was that he preached the truth. So what is the surprise if selfish people become enemies of preachers of the truth? For, even in Satya-yuga, when dharma stood on four legs, a father did not hesitate to act as an enemy toward his son who was a preacher of the truth. Even the naturally affectionate heart of a father became filled with malice for his truth-preaching son. How glorious is Lord Viṣṇu's illusory energy, which makes the impossible possible! The *jīvas* are so totally averse to Viṣṇu, as if having taken a vow to remain averse to Him, that they will not hear discussion of the truth or of the essential characteristics of Kṛṣṇa, nor of an assertment of their own perverted nature. When examples of disregard for the truth and of malice toward preachers of the truth were seen even in Satya-yuga, then in this Age of

Kali (the age of argumentation and quarrel) is it astonishing to see both a prevailing indifference to the truth and a combined effort to thwart the *ācāryas* engaged in spreading truth?

During the youthhood of Śrīmad Rāmānuja, who was one of the four *ācāryas* who preached Sātvata dharma, when he refuted his guru Yādava-prakāśa's explanation of the *śruti* statement *kapyāsaṁ-puṇḍarīkākṣam* and preached the truth without accepting subordination to such a false, putative guru inimical to Viṣṇu, from that time onward his harassment began.* And not only harassment, for Yādava-prakāśa, who considered himself a guru, organized a great conspiracy to kill Śrī Rāmānuja—who, as a preacher of Śrī Viṣṇu's *mano-'bhīṣṭa,* therefore enacted a *līlā* whereby the ordinary people considered that he fled for his life.

Worshipers of Śrī Raṅganātha at Śrīraṅgam used to steal the ingredients meant for Viṣṇu's service; instead of using Viṣṇu's wealth in His service, they would engage it in service to their wives and sons and deceitfully tell ordinary people that such usage was for Viṣṇu. Śrī Rāmānujācārya protested that theft by, and the lust for material enjoyment of, the attendants of the deity. Wherever the truth is preached, it is inevitable that blindly selfish persons who are opposed to the truth will become inimical; hence, to kill Rāmānujācārya, the *pūjārīs* at Śrīraṅgam first gave him rice mixed with poison. But after the simple-hearted wife of one of those *pūjārīs* by hint informed Ācārya Rāmānuja of their evil intent, he gave the rice to a dog, who ate it and immediately died. And on yet another occasion, the same *pūjārīs* gave Śrī Rāmānuja poison mixed with the *caraṇāmṛta* of Śrī Raṅganātha.

This illusory world is always ruled by those who are envious of Viṣṇu, for they are the majority. Indeed it is so arranged by the will of Viṣṇu, the bewilderer of the demons, just to protect the rarely attained and most confidential treasure of *bhakti.*

When Śrī Rāmānujācārya commenced his preaching mission within the Cola province—propagating worship of Viṣṇu and discussion of the truth— the ruler thereof, who was a *smārta* inimical to Viṣṇu, began to burn fiercely in the fire of envy. He sent agents to try to forcibly convert Rāmānuja into a *smārta* Śaiva. But an attached, mundane, fruitive *smārta* cannot touch even a single hair of a transcendental Vaiṣṇava *ācārya.* Let the attached *smārtas* be leaders of society—moreover, let them be rulers of kingdoms, let them have the power to punish and kill—but a Vaiṣṇava, and especially an *ācārya,* is never their subject or under their control. The so-called Vaiṣṇavas who lick the feet of *smārtas* attached to fruitive activities may be afraid of their angry red eyes, but a real Vaiṣṇava does not care for them. The Vaiṣṇava *ācārya,* who drives out all the contamination of Kali, declares that he will silence the *smārtas'* shouting and scolding, and is never afraid. For this reason Ācārya Śrī Rāmānuja, when brought in the presence of the angry reddened eyes of the *smārta* king of Chola, did not stop forcefully and loudly speaking the truth.

Because of the Chola king Kṛmikaṇṭha, the eyes of Kūreśa, Śrī Rāmānuja's ideal disciple, became gouged out rather than he accept the *smārta* doctrine. Thus it is seen that whenever the truth was preached in the world, godless persons averse to Viṣṇu were ready to obstruct in various ways the godly preachers of the truth. This is one of the prime and clear symptoms to

be accepted in understanding the non-duplicitous truth. Just as all the theories and *siddhāntas* supported by all the godless people of the universe must certainly be godless, whatever preaching of *siddhānta* they jointly attempt to oppose must indeed be the highest truth.

Now one *ācārya* has been discussed. What kind of opposition the *ācāryas* Śrī Viṣṇusvāmī, Śrīman Madhva, and Śrī Nimbāditya faced when they preached the truth can be understood by studying their lives—on one hand, their anger at those who were envious of the devotees, and on the other, their ideal of selflessly acting for others' benefit. By appreciating these qualities of the above-mentioned *ācāryas,* one's heart becomes overflooded with *bhakti-bhāva* for Viṣṇu, the maintainer of the universe. Glorious is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Viṣṇu, the protector of *sanātana-dharma* and the ocean of truth! And unlimitedly more glorious are the Sātvata *ācāryas* sent by Him, who are oceans of causeless mercy and who create auspiciousness for the world!

Now I will say a few words about Śrī Gaurasundara—the avatar and crest jewel of all the *ācāryas*—as well the *ācāryas* among his servants, and thus end this essay. An example of how distasteful one becomes in the eyes of others when he begins to preach the truth is also seen in Śrī Gaurasundara, the crest jewel among all *ācāryas.* As long as Śrī Gaurasundara acted as an avid follower of moralistic religion while a *gṛhastha,* playing as an ordinary *brāhmaṇa paṇḍita* in a society averse to Viṣṇu and enacting pastimes of studying, teaching, serving His widowed mother who was afflicted by separation from her departed husband, displaying affection for His birthplace, performing rituals for His father's future life (ceremonies such as *śrāddha* at Gayā), and exhibiting devotional respect for demigods and *brāhmaṇas* by drinking the water after washing the feet of a *brāhmaṇa*—correspondingly, the attached fruitive workers, thinking Him to be special soul but basically one of them, went on praising Him, not understanding the purpose of Viṣṇu's activities, which bewilder the godless.

But this glorification did not last long. After He returned from Gayā and revealed His true identity, fulfilling the desires of pure devotees like Śrī Advaita and Śrīvāsa, and began preaching the truth, the same *smārta* Hindus, who had previously praised Nimāi with a hundred mouths, began to yell at Him from all directions. At this time the blasphemy of Nimāi began: "Nimāi is no longer good. He is about to break Hindu dharma by glorifying *bhagavat-kīrtana* and propagating that *pūjās* for goddesses Maṅgalacaṇḍī and Viṣahari, and the singing, dancing, and music that take place on those occasions, are meaningless. He is propagating that Vaiṣṇava *darśana* and taking shelter of the lotus feet of a guru are unlimitedly better than performing *śrāddha* at Gayā, that a nondevotee *brāhmaṇa,* like a dogeater, should not even be seen or spoken to, and that a devotee born in a family of dogeaters is supremely worshipable and purifying."

Nimāi preached these truths, and when the *pañcopāsaka-brāhmaṇa* students obstructed that preaching, He chased them with a stick in hand to beat them:

pūrve bhāla chila ei nimāi paṇḍita
gayā haite āsiyā cālāya viparīta

"This Nimāi Paṇḍita was previously good, but since He has returned from Gayā He conducts Himself oppositely." (Cc 1.17.206)

śuni' krodha kaila saba paḍuyāra gaṇa
sabe meli' kare tabe prabhura nindana

Hearing of the incident, all the students became angry and joined together in criticizing the Lord.

saba deśa bhraṣṭa kaila ekalā nimāñi
brāhmaṇa mārite cāhe, dharma-bhaya nāi

"Nimāi alone has spoiled the entire country," they accused. "He wants to strike a *brāhmaṇa.* He has no fear of religious principles.

punaḥ yadi aiche kare māriba tāhare
kon vā mānuṣa haya, ki karite pāre

"If He again performs such an atrocious act, certainly we shall beat Him. What kind of person is He that He can check us?" (Cc 1.17.254–56)

Witnessing the wicked mentality of the mundane fruitive *smārtas,* and desiring to benefit them, and distinguish Himself from them, Nimāi decided to accept *sannyāsa* and thus renounce their bad association. By His personal example, the Lord showed that a Vaiṣṇava is never under the control of ordinary *smārta* society. The *smārtas'* understanding of Vaiṣṇavas as being but one class within their society only shows how deceived and unfortunate they are.

O *smārta,* attached to ritualistic activities! In your sense-gratifying nature, born of bones and marrow, you were all deceived, considering Viṣṇu and the Vaiṣṇavas to belong merely to a particular caste, and thus at one time considered Śrī Gaurasundara an attached householder like yourself. But today, out of tremendous non-deceptive mercy upon you, Gaurasundara, by renouncing duties like maintaining a wife, has shown the ideal of crossing beyond worldly morality. Instead of consoling his widowed mother, He doubled the blazing of the unextinguished fire of her lamentation for her husband. He renounced affection for His birthplace and relatives, and preached the futility of performing *śrāddha* at Gayā and traveling to holy places of pilgrimage, as compared to rendering Kṛṣṇa-*sevā* under the shelter of the lotus feet of a guru. He demonstrated that drinking the water that has washed the feet of a *brāhmaṇa* is not an act meant for fruitive workers but a show of affection by the Lord for His servant, and proof of the topmost position of the Vaiṣṇavas. Transgressing the *śāstrīya* injunction forbidding *sannyāsa* in Kalī-yuga, a rule applicable to *smārtas,* and to instruct people in general, He accepted the kind of *sannyāsa* that entails renouncing the bad association of mundane fruitive *smārtas* and others. After accepting *sannyāsa,* by His own behavior and also adroitly through the two *jagad*-guru *ācāryas* Nityānanda and Advaita, He showed the meaninglessness of the contaminated *smārta*-dharma, which adjudges Kṛṣṇa-*prasāda* to be contaminated leftovers (Cc

2.3.99) and Vaiṣṇavas to be members of a particular caste (Cc 2.3.97). To alter the fruitive *smārta* way of thinking, He had Śrī Advaita Ācārya declare, *sannyāsī nāśila mora saba smṛti-dharma:* "A sannyasi has spoiled all My brahminical *smṛti* regulations" (Cc 2.3.101); and by this utterance He also revealed that the purport of His own *sannyāsa-līlā* was to extinguish the last flame of the fire of *smārta*-dharma. By ordering Advaitācārya to happily honor His remnants with Haridāsa and Mukunda at Śāntipura (Cc 2.3.106), He propagated the meaninglessness of the offensive *smārta* conception that *mahā-prasāda* and Vaiṣṇavas are subject to caste considerations. At that time the intimate friends of the fruitive *smārtas* (like Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya), who themselves were actually *smārtas* but posed as *nirviśeṣa-vādīs,* and Māyāvādī sannyasis like Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī, began to obstruct in various ways Mahāprabhu's preaching of truth and to blaspheme Him. Moreover, Rāmacandra Purī, who made a show of being a disciple of Śrī Mādhavendra Purī, did not hesitate to criticize Mahāprabhu's eating and other habits. In this way, an *ācārya* who preaches the truth must accept with a bowed head many kinds of criticism from all kinds of inimical persons and go on preaching the truth for the benefit of the inimical society. Thus it is not possible to describe how great the heart of an *ācārya* is, and how much compassion he feels for the suffering of the *jīvas.*

Those who have read *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā,* chapter nine, surely know how the Buddhists attempted to dishonor Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu when He began preaching against their theories. Whenever Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* vow to preach the truth, the godless people who fill up the world and are committed to their own inauspiciousness make a concerted effort against the truth. Had Ṭhākura Haridāsa or Śrī Nityānanda not loudly preached Hari-*kathā* and *harināma* but instead exhibited *nirjana-bhajana-līlā,* then the one would not apparently have been beaten in twenty-two bazars and the other would not apparently have suffered being wounded above the eye by a pot. Because Ṭhākura Haridāsa preached the truth, even today the fruitive *smārtas* refer to him as, for instance, a *yavana* who disrespected *varṇāśrama* principles by eating from the *śrāddha* plate meant for *brāhmaṇas;* thus the fruitive *smārtas* continue to commit terrible offenses at his lotus feet. Even today, they continue to blaspheme Nityānanda by calling Him misbehaved, a transgressor of the *smārta's varṇāśrama*-dharma, an eater of food cooked by a low-caste person, and so on. Just to save all these fruitive workers from blaspheming Viṣṇu, the most merciful Vaiṣṇava Ṭhākura Śrīla Vṛndāvana said *tabe lāthi māroṅ tā'ra śirera upare:* "I will kick on his head" (Cb 1.9.225). But because he used that expression, some *smārtas* cite it and blame Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura for their defamation.

Over a long period of time, wicked persons may become elevated. But *jagad*-guru Gaura-Nityānanda, Ṭhākura Haridāsa, Ṭhākura Vṛndāvana, and other *ācaryas,* all of whom rose like the sun almost five hundred years ago, are even now regularly blasphemed in various ways by many persons—most doing so internally, although a few openly. Thus it can be understood how much this world is averse to Hari, and how greatly munificent, elevated personalities are these *ācaryas* who are *para-duḥkha-duḥkhī* and the distributors of non-malefic mercy.[2]

Eight

Assuming the Responsibility of Being Guru

From a lecture by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura at Saccidānanda Maṭha, Cuttack, on 10 July 1927

We have taken upon ourselves the responsibility of welcoming this grave charge. All in the audience have accepted ordinary seats. I alone have been provided with a lofty seat. All are in effect being told, "Have a look at a big animal from the zoo gardens. What arrogance! So foolish! So wicked! Have you ever seen such a big brute? Garlands of flowers have been put around his neck! What laudations! What bombastic long-drawn hyperbolic adjectives! And how complacently he is listening to the praise of his own achievements, how intently, and with his own ears! Evidently he also feels delighted. Is he not acting in plain violation of the teaching of Mahāprabhu? Can such a big brute, so selfish and insolent, ever be reclaimed from brutishness?"

I happen to be one of the greatest of fools. Because of my arrogance no one offers me good advice. Inasmuch as nobody condescends to instruct me, it occurred to me that I should present my case to Mahāprabhu Himself and see how He would advise me. Then Śrī Caitanya-deva said to me, "Whomever you meet, instruct him regarding Kṛṣṇa. On my order become a guru and save this land. In this you will not be obstructed by the current of the world. You will have My company once again at this place."[1]

In these verses is found the proper explanation of the apparent inconsistency described above. He whose only teaching is humility more than that of a blade of grass said, "By My command, become a guru and save this land." In this instance Mahāprabhu Himself has given the decree, "Perform the duty of guru, even as I Myself do. Convey this same instruction to whomsoever you chance to meet." Caitanya-deva says, "Tell them these very words: 'On my order, become a guru and save this land.' Deliver people from their foolishness."

Now, whoever happens to hear these words would naturally protest with palms joined, "But I am really a great sinner; how can I be guru? You are Godhead Himself, the *jagad*-guru. Only You can be guru." To this Mahāprabhu replies, "In this you will not be obstructed by the current of the world. You will have My company once again at this place. Do not practice the occupation of a guru for the purpose of injuring others through malice. Do not adopt the livelihood of a guru to become immersed in the slough of this world. But if indeed you can be My guileless servant, you will be endowed with My power. That you need not fear."

I have no fear. My *gurudeva* has heard this instruction from his *gurudeva*. And it is for this reason that my *gurudeva* accepted even such a great sinner as I and told me, "On my order, become a guru and save this land." Only those who have never heard these words of Śrī Gaurasundara say, "How bizarre to listen to one's own praise!" In their opinion, while the guru

is instructing the disciple in the Eleventh Canto of *Bhāgavatam,* he is perpetuating a major sin. What is the *ācārya* to do when he has to explain the verse *ācāryaṁ māṁ vijānīyāt,* "Never disregard the *ācārya* or consider him your equal in any sense"?[2] These are the words of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, whereby the *jīva* is to be benefited. Is the guru to desert his seat, the seat of the *ācārya,* from which these words are to be explained? That office was conferred on him by his *gurudeva.* If he does not act up to its requirements, he is doomed to perdition for his offense against the holy name in the shape of disrespect toward the guru. He must execute his duty notwithstanding such behavior being open to the charge of egoism.

When the guru imparts the mantra to his disciple, should he not tell him to worship the guru by that mantra? Should he instead say, "Give the guru a few strokes of the shoe or horsewhip"? "The guru is never to be decried. The guru is the abode of all the gods"[3]—while reading from the *Bhāgavatam* to his disciple should the guru abstain from communicating these words to him? "Only to him who possesses guileless spiritual devotion to the guru, similar to that offered to Kṛṣṇa Himself, are the holy mysteries manifested"—is the guru not to tell these things to his disciples?[4] *Ādau guru-pūjā:* "The worship of the guru has precedence over all others; the guru is to be served just as Kṛṣṇa is served; the guru is to be worshiped in a particular way"—is the guru to desert his seat without telling all these things to the disciple?[5]

In the angle there is always the defect in the shape of absence of fullness, the evenness of level, of 180 degrees less than 360 degrees. But in the plain surface, in 360 degrees, there is no such defect.[*] Ordinary foolish people fail to grasp the simple truth that in the emancipated state no defect is possible.

As the saying goes, "Having begun the dance it is no use to draw the veil."[*] I am doing the duty of guru, yet if I preach that no one should shout *jaya!* to me—that is, if I merely say in a roundabout way, "Sing *jaya!* to me"—it would be nothing short of duplicity. Our *gurudeva* has not taught us such insincerity. Neither has Mahāprabhu taught such insincerity. I must serve Bhagavān in a straightforward manner.

The word of Bhagavān has come down through the guru. I have to obey it in all sincerity. I will not disrespect the guru at the insistence of any foolish or malicious sectarians, especially since Śrī Gurudeva has directed me, "On my order, become a guru and save this land." My *gurudeva* has taught this command and in turn conveyed it to me. I will not be guilty of any insincerity in carrying out that command. In this matter I will not accept the ideal of ignorant, insincere, pseudo-ascetic sectarianism. I will not learn insincerity. The worldly-minded, the malicious, the false renunciants, and the selfish cannot understand how the devotees of Bhagavān, kicking out everything of this world by the command of Bhagavān, throughout the twenty-four hours never deviate, not even for a second, from service to God.

Hypocritical sectarians and pseudo-Vaiṣṇavas who internally cherish the longing for earthly fame will naturally think, "What a shame it is for one occupying the seat of the guru to listen to the eulogies of disciples!" But every Vaiṣṇava regards all other Vaiṣṇavas as the objects of his veneration. When Ṭhākura Haridāsa exhibited an attitude of extreme humility, Mahāprabhu

said, “You are the greatest of the world, the crest jewel. Please, let us have our meal together.” He carried in His arms the *sac-cid-ānanda* form of Ṭhākura Haridāsa. In the community that follows Śrī Rūpa, the qualities of desiring no honor for oneself and readiness to duly honor others are fully present. Those who detect any disparity are, like the owl, blind while the sun shines. By such conduct they commit offense.

If I disobey the law that has come down to me through the chain of preceptorial succession, the offense of neglecting to carry out the order of the guru will sever me from the lotus feet of Śrī Gurudeva. If to carry out the command of the Vaiṣṇava guru I have to be arrogant or brutish, or suffer eternal perdition, I am prepared to welcome such eternal damnation and even sign a contract to that effect. I will not listen to the words of malicious persons in lieu of the command of Śrī Gurudeva. I will dissipate with indomitable courage and conviction the currents of thought of the rest of the world, relying on the strength derived from the lotus feet of Śrī Gurudeva. I confess to this arrogance.

By sprinkling a particle of the pollen of the lotus feet of my preceptor, crores of people like you will be saved. There is no such learning in this world, no such sound reasoning in all the fourteen worlds, in any man or god, that can weigh more than a solitary particle of the dust of the lotus feet of my *gurudeva.* My *gurudeva,* in whom I have implicit trust, can never spite me. I am by no means willing to listen to the words of any one who wants to hurt me, or to accept such a malicious person as my preceptor.

May all of you have pity on me, the most heavily handicapped of all creatures, inasmuch as you happen to be of liberal disposition. You are always forgiving many persons of all sorts. May you do good to us by sincerely pardoning even this most arrogant of persons who is no other than myself.[6]

Nine

Deceitful Disciples

On the morning of 18 December 1936, thirteen days before his departure from this world, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī gave the following informal talk in his room at Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha. It was his last discourse before he became bedridden, not to rise again. He spoke with such amplitude that his cheeks became red. Present were a few Western devotees and also Śrī Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda, who made notes and later published these instructions (reproduced below) in the Gauḍīya *(17.471–73; 11 February 1939). Most of the speech was in Bengali. Words recorded as having been spoken in English are set in boldface.*

"To cross a river one should keep a **boat** and a boatman; similarly one needs to keep a guru"—I have no connection with persons who have accepted a guru with this attitude. They deceived me, therefore they too will fall prey to deceit. Birth after birth I will deceive them. They will fall aside by partaking in worldly objects.

To rule a kingdom a king is required, and to correct the king another person is required. He might tell the king, **"You are seeking private happiness while we are seeking public happiness,"** but we say, **"We want neither public nor private happiness—we want only Kṛṣṇa's happiness."** The **rulers** have one kind of **sectarian happiness,** and the **Congress** people have another kind of **sectarian happiness.** We will not participate in any **sectarian happiness.** We will join the **party** of Kṛṣṇa's **happiness.** We are not worshipers of Kṛṣṇa alone, nor of guru alone. We are worshipers of Kṛṣṇa with His **entourage.** The topmost servitor of Kṛṣṇa is *śrī-guru-pāda-padma.*[*] *Gurudeva* is guru (the heaviest, unshakeable) due to his not taking possession of Kṛṣṇa's property. Those taking possession are *laghu* (light, superficial, fallible).

Some who made a show of accepting a guru as if keeping a **boat** for crossing a river tell me, **"We may submit to you on spiritual matters,** yet because you are quite incompetent in wordly affairs, in other matters we will **follow** the **public party** opposed to serving Hari." But that is not our line of thought. Apart from items conducive to Kṛṣṇa-*sevā,* we accept nothing of this world and nothing from beyond it. They think, "Just as there is a **party** of nondevotees, so there is a **party** of Hari-guru-Vaiṣṇavas." But we say, "There is no **party feeling** among Hari-guru-Vaiṣṇavas. They are not vying with nondevotees. We do not long to become big in this world by rivaling nondevotees. Our only hope and desire is to become a particle of dust at the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya's Śrī Rūpa:

ādadānas tṛṇaṁ dantair idaṁ yāce punaḥ punaḥ
śrīmad-rūpa-padāmbhoja- dhūliḥ syāṁ janma-janmani

Taking a blade of grass between my teeth, I fall down and pray again and again to become dust at Śrīmad Rūpa's lotus feet, birth after birth.[1]

Those who approach *śrī-guru-pāda-padma,* who approach Śrī Rūpa, being convinced that "I am very great. I am a person of monumental realization. I am the guru of gurus. I am the guru of Vaiṣṇavas," can never understand the glory of being a particle of dust at Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhu's feet. Our *śrī-guru-pāda-padma* utterly routed this kind of thinking. In this regard we have learned from Śrī Rūpa:

viracaya mayi daṇḍaṁ dīna-bandho dayāṁ vā
gatir iha na bhavattaḥ kācid anyā mamāsti
nipatatu śata-koṭir nirmalaṁ vā navāmbhas
tad api kila payodaḥ stūyate cātakena

O friend of the poor, do what you like with me—give me either mercy or punishment—but in this world I have no one to look to except Your Lordship. The *cātaka* bird always prays for the cloud, regardless of whether it showers rains or throws a thunderbolt.[2]*

Our only firm determination is:

āmi to' tomāra, tumi to' āmāra,
ki kāja apara dhane?

I am Yours, You are mine. Why should I care for others' assets? (*Śaraṇāgati*)

Our Śrī Rūpa said:

sajātīyāśaye snigdhe sādhau saṅgaḥ svato vare
śrīmad-bhāgavatārthānām āsvādo rasikaiḥ saha

One should associate with devotees who are more advanced than oneself and endowed with a similar type of affection for the Lord (*sajātīya-āśaya*), and should taste the meaning of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in the association of pure devotees. (Brs 1.2.90)

I never indulge in *jana-saṅga.*[*] *Vijātīya* people surrounded my *guru-pāda-padma* on all four sides. Fools thought, "He is keeping association with *vijātīya* people. He appreciates them; he always stays with them." In reality, he did exactly the opposite. As much as he paid external honor to somebody, to that degree he deceived him; for we can judge anything by the fruit it bears. Persons desirous to enjoy sense objects did not actually associate with my *guru-pāda-padma,* nor did they ever get his *darśana.* If we come to study *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to learn **geography** and **astronomy,** then we prove to be *anya-jātīya-āśaya.* In the same way, some come to see a sadhu or guru to **study** his scholarship, appearance, skills, and so on. They want to collect *dharma-artha-kāma-mokṣa* from a sadhu or guru. If this is my case then I am *anya-jātīya-āśaya.* Servants of Śrī Rūpa do not associate with me, for I am *vijātīya-āśaya,* but deceive me by giving me objects of this world:

astv evam aṅga bhagavān bhajatāṁ mukundo
muktiṁ dadāti karhicit sma na bhakti-yogam

To many who worship Him, Bhagavān Mukunda (Kṛṣṇa) gives liberation, yet very rarely does He bestow direct loving service. (SB 5.6.18)

Because the *Bhāgavatam* **does not know geography and astronomy,** do not **neglect** it. The *anya-jātīya-āśaya* say, "From *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* I will take only **spiritual advice**, and will do everything else taking the **advice** of the **public** who are averse to Kṛṣṇa." Those not established in the *ānukūlyasya saṅkalpaḥ prātikūlyasya varjanam* verse of Śrī Rūpa, in accepting only things favorable to *bhakti* and rejecting everything unfavorable, are not surrendered to *guru-pāda-padma*.[†]

I will perform all **mundane work** in a manner conducive to Kṛṣṇa-*sevā,* never in a way congenial to the nondevoted **public.** One should always be conscious of what to accept and what to reject in Kṛṣṇa-*sevā.* The **criterion** is the principle of *ānukūlya* (favorable) and *prātikūlya* (unfavorable) in Kṛṣṇa-*sevā.*

We will never imitate **private** or **public** stupidity. We will not become **S. Dey, S. Basu, B., K., or P.**[*] Still, taking **advantage** of all these worshipers of Abhimanyu and Ulucaṇḍī, cheating them all, we will worship Śrī Gopījanavallabha.[†]**If we can forsake everything that stands against my guru's beloved's interest, we will be ultimately victorious.** From all things we will **pick up** those conducive for Hari-*sevā.* Let it be **unethical to the extreme;** even being so, it may be linked with Hari, Hari-*sambandhī.* I am not in the least after the **ethics** of R. Datta's mode, the criminal **ethics** that wants to confine my Kṛṣṇa to prison. Kṛṣṇa is *sarva-tantra-svatantra*, supremely independent.

Gaura-virodhī nija-jana jāni para: "I deem a relative inimical to Gaura a stranger."[3] Gaura-*sevā* is my sole **interest.** It is not by merely claiming **"We have a higher method of living"** that they have become great. Westerners say, **"We have greater guns."** Those among us who, accepting **Hitlerism's** conception of being great, are saying, "I can delight the public tremendously, so I am great," or "I can lord over the Vaiṣṇavas, so I am great," I don't consider great. I call great a person whose only **interest** is Gaura-*sevā.* Yet such a person considers himself more *laghu* than all that be.

Some people say, "Three *guṇas* are discussed in the *Gītā,* which means that the *Gītā* approves activities in the *guṇas.*" Some people say, *"Karma, jñāna, yoga*—not to speak of them, even *anyābhilāṣa* is supported in the *Gītā.*" But we do not say this. The *Gītā* supports only exclusive, uninterrupted *bhakti,* and rejects everything else as *vijātīya-āśaya* (perverted aspirations), giving them only a chink when they are somehow conducive to Kṛṣṇa-*sevā*. So many people join me and declare that I approve their perverted aspirations. I do not stand for this sort of egalitarianism. They will get remuneration in the same coin that they paid me.

Spirituality is one thing, and the **present-day mentality** is something else. Therefore "I will

hear from you only religious instructions and will roam in this world with my own intelligence as a guru"—those who say like this subscribe to the logic of half a hen.[*] **"As I keep my boats, so I keep my master"**—one who secretly maintains this mentality has not come to me. Like the **South Sea Bubble,** or in English history the **South Sea Company,** they will raise their head very high for a few days, proud that "I am great," but shortly afterward will evaporate.[†] Skyrockets very quickly go high but then fizzle out. The servant of *guru-pāda-padma* is not like that.

The final goal should be settled first. All happiness should lead to the absolute fountainhead. Many think that the efforts of *karma-kāṇḍīs* are Indianism, but we do not subscribe to such Indianism. We should not subscribe to non-Indianism also, that will go to the happiness of mankind. We take all for the happiness of Kṛṣṇa. We do not admire black skin or white skin. We only say and will always say that the Absolute should be served. The words uttered by my *gurudeva* Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī are perfect. I pray to all that they will help me in the service of my *śrī-gurudeva* Śrī Rūpa. My *gurudeva* has no other idea but to serve the fountainhead. The very treasure of *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha,* the very treasure of *sac-cid-ānanda-rasa,* is with my *gurudeva.* So we must not consider that Rūpa Gosvāmī was a fool because he had no chance to learn modern science, astronomy, or geography.

> *para-svabhāva-karmāṇi na praśaṁsen na garhayet*
> *viśvam ekātmakaṁ paśyan prakṛtyā puruṣeṇa ca*
>
> One should neither praise nor criticize the conditioned nature and activities of other persons. Rather, one should see this world as simply the combination of material nature and the enjoying souls, all based on the one Supreme Absolute Truth. (SB 11.28.1)

Let all people of the world condemn me, or let them sing my glories, but may I never be deprived of being a particle of dust clinging to Śrī Rūpa's lotus feet. **How can I get rid of time and space? How can I get rid of empiricism or impersonalism?** It is possible only if I could become dust at Śrī Rūpa's lotus feet; otherwise, there is no means. If not, my fleshy perception won't be removed by a scintilla. **I want rather to follow Śrī Rūpa. I want to become the eternal dust of his lotus feet, rather than a British lion, a Russian bear, or anything of the world.** With a straw between my teeth I beg you all, "Help me to become pollen at the lotus feet of Śrī Rūpa." And that will also benefit you.

Ten

Genuine and False Gaura-bhajana

From Gauḍīya *17.480–89*

When Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was in Lucknow in November 1929, the district sessions judge, Śrī Rāya Bāhādura Basu, came to meet him. Finding this sadhu wholly devoted to Gaurāṅga, Mr. Basu related how his friend R. Babu, a superintendent engineer, also was known as an exalted devotee of Mahāprabhu. Mr. Basu described that when R. Babu's only daughter fell sick, R. Babu started loudly chanting "Gaura, Gaura!" day and night. As much as his daughter's condition intensified, so did R. Babu's Gaura-*bhajana.* He began to regularly visit the house of his guru, always coming and going, offering many varieties of delectable food for his guru's deities. All were amazed by his unprecedented guru-*bhakti.* Yet despite such devotion to Mahāprabhu, his only daughter died. On the day she departed, from early morning until about nine in the evening her breathing became increasingly strained, and with much suffering she finally succumbed.

After some days, when Mr. Basu again saw R. Babu, he found that R. Babu's apparently unflinching devotion to Mahāprabhu had completely vanished. R. Babu told Mr. Basu, "There is no such 'Mahāprabhu.' If truly there were Bhagavān, He would not cause suffering to His devotee. If He were truly present in everyone's heart, then knowing the pain that would afflict the heart of His devotee, surely He would have saved my daughter. His greatness as God would have become more widespread in this world. Devotees' faith and devotion to Him would have grown a million times. They would have preached His greatness to others and brought them to worship Him. All members of the family would have increased their faith in Mahāprabhu. And once revived, my daughter would have become so much more attracted to Him. People in ignorance have faith in the Lord and chant the name of Mahāprabhu. But it is more felicific to go about one's daily work than to utter the name of Gaura. That is the truth."

Addressing Mr. Basu as to the cause of this about-face, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura spoke at length:

The Mahāprabhu whom I have taken shelter of is not the Mahāprabhu of R. Babu. He takes Mahāprabhu like a hired gardener. I take shelter of the Mahāprabhu of Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita. Mahāprabhu spoke of Śrīvāsa, who was absorbed in *prema,* as follows:

> *putra-śoka nā jānila ye mora preme*
> *hena saba saṅga muñi cchāḍiba kemane*
>
> How can I ever leave the association of such a person who, due to his love for Me, is unaffected even by the demise of his son? (Cb 2.25.52)

I worship the Mahāprabhu of that Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, who told the ladies of his house to stop their

crying:

kala raba śuni' yadi prabhu bāhya pāya
tabe āji gaṅgā praveśimu sarvathāya

If by this hullabaloo the Lord's ecstasy is disturbed, then today I shall certainly enter the Gaṅgā [and thus commit suicide]. (Cb 2.25.36)*

I worship the Mahāprabhu of Śrī Rūpa, who described Him thus:

viracaya mayi daṇḍaṁ dīna-bandho dayāṁ vā
gatir iha na bhavattaḥ kācid anyā mamāsti
nipatatu śata-koṭir nirmalaṁ vā navāmbhas
tad api kila payodaḥ stūyate cātakena

O friend of the poor, do what you like with me, give me either mercy or punishment, but in this world I have no one to look to except Your Lordship. The *cātaka* bird always prays for the cloud, regardless of whether it showers rains or throws a thunderbolt.[1]

I worship the Mahāprabhu who played the role of *jagad*-guru to teach us:

āśliṣya vā pāda-ratāṁ pinaṣṭu mām
adarśanān marma-hatāṁ karotu vā
yathā tathā vā vidadhātu lampaṭo
mat-prāṇa-nāthas tu sa eva nāparaḥ

Lord Kṛṣṇa, the lover of many female devotees, may embrace this fully surrendered maidservant or trample me with His feet, or may render me brokenhearted by not being present before me for a long duration of time, yet still He is nothing less than the absolute Lord of my heart.[2]

nā gaṇi āpana-duḥkha, sabe vāñchi tāṅra sukha,
tāṅra sukha—āmāra tātparya
more yadi diyā duḥkha, tāṅra haila mahā-sukha,
sei duḥkha—mora sukha-varya

I do not mind My personal distress. I wish only for the happiness of Kṛṣṇa, for His happiness is the meaning of My life. If He feels great happiness in giving Me distress, that distress is the best of My happiness. (Cc 3.20.52)

Mahāprabhu may release all the misfortunes of the universe upon me millions of times so that I will worship Him. I am ready for that with all my senses. Accepting those calamities, I surrender to His feet, thinking He is protecting me, drawing me toward His lotus feet. He is most merciful to remove my duplicity. He is not allowing me to enjoy my senses. He is making

me understand that other than His lotus feet, there is no eternal object of which to take refuge in this world. I am bearing the heavy weight of karmic reactions due to my past actions. If I endure these with a little sufferance and take refuge in my eternal Lord, I will find actual benefit.

If I belong to the enjoying category, then when my enjoyment is interrupted I become angry. On the other hand, the renunciant will say that it is proper to give up enjoyment. The devotees of Śrī Gaurāṅga do not tell anyone either to indulge in or renounce enjoyment. They say, "Let the *jīva* imbibe his natural tendency for real, spiritual objects." If one accepts all three types of misery, which come upon him in full force, it is of no benefit, and if one wants to artificially renounce attachment, he cannot. But one who performs *daṇḍavat* to the Lord's feet with body, mind, and words is the rightful heir to liberation. Whatever drawback may come, he will accept it as the Lord manifesting in the form of mercy. It defies description how much Śrī Caitanya has arranged for our welfare. We are on the path of material enjoyment. To open our eyes He orchestrates that certain obstacles appear, stage by stage, among the objects of attachment. He gave me bad health and step by step gave me accidents. He gave a specific transitory nature to all things, to help put us on the spiritual path.

I remember an incident of long ago: A high-court lawyer named Datta, whose son was on his deathbed, requested me, "You are a devotee. Please keep my son alive." I told him, "I am not a life-restorer. I will try to change the way you think." This Datta, an atheist, persisted, "If your God exists, you should have Him cure my son." I directly said to him, "I will not make a campaign against the desire of the Lord. I cannot nourish the ideology of the *śāktas*. Śrī Gaurasundara is extremely merciful, as demonstrated by His providing millions of dangers and setbacks in this world."

> *śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-dayā karaha vicāra vicāra*
> *karile citte pābe camatkāra*
>
> If you are indeed interested in logic and argument, kindly apply it to the mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. If you do so, you will find it to be strikingly wonderful. (Cc 1.8.15)

It is not the prime duty of the *jīva* to live in forgetfulness of the Lord. This world is not our eternal residence. To remind us of this, at every moment the Lord interjects problems amid our pursuit of material pleasure. Śrī Kulaśekhara has declared:

> *nāsthā dharme na vasu-nicaye naiva kāmopabhoge*
> *yad bhāvyaṁ tad bhavatu bhagavan pūrva-karmānurūpam*
> *etat prārthyaṁ mama bahu-mataṁ janma-janmāntare 'pi*
> *tvat-pādāmbho-ruha-yuga-gatā niścalā bhaktir astu*
>
> I do not desire to perform religious rituals or to have an earthly kingdom. I do not care for sense enjoyments; let them appear and disappear in accordance with my previous deeds.

My only desire is to be fixed in *bhakti* to the lotus feet of the Lord, even though I may continue to take birth here life after life.[3]

Śrī Gaurasundara also recited a similar verse:

na dhanaṁ na janaṁ na sundarīṁ
kavitāṁ vā jagad-īśa kāmaye
mama janmani janmanīśvare
bhavatād bhaktir ahaitukī tvayi

O Lord of the universe, I do not want wealth, followers, beautiful women, or learning. May I simply perform unmotivated devotional service to You, birth after birth.[4]

I will not fall into hypocrisy. Birth after birth I have done so, but I shall not continue. I will not involve you in the results of my previous actions, for I have heard the instructions of the *Bhāgavatam* from the lotus feet of my guru:

dharmaḥ projjhita-kaitavo 'tra paramo nirmatsarāṇāṁ satāṁ
vedyaṁ vāstavam atra vastu śivadaṁ tāpa-trayonmūlanam
śrīmad-bhāgavate mahā-muni-kṛte kiṁ vā parair īśvaraḥ
sadyo hṛdy avarudhyate 'tra kṛtibhiḥ śuśrūṣubhis tat-kṣaṇāt

Completely rejecting all religious activities that are materially motivated, this *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* propounds the highest truth, understandable by devotees who are fully pure in heart. The highest truth is reality distinguished from illusion for the welfare of all. Such truth uproots the threefold miseries. This beautiful *Bhāgavatam,* compiled by the great sage Śrīla Vyāsadeva, is sufficient in itself for God realization. What is the need of any other scripture? As soon as one attentively and submissively hears the message of the *Bhāgavatam,* by this culture of knowledge the Supreme Lord is established within his heart. (SB 1.1.2)

My *gurudeva* never accepted service from others. Unto anyone coming to serve him he wished for the destruction of fourteen generations of that person's family, saying, “You want to make me your servant in the next life! You will force me to become your servant to repay the debt. But I will not become the servant of anyone except Kṛṣṇa's devotees. Birth after birth, I do not want to be the servant of anyone except Śrī Rādhā Ṭhākurāṇī, the best servant of Kṛṣṇa.” He used to tell me, “Endeavor only for spiritual things. Nothing else should be done.” He was neither a learned scholar, nor even literate. With tears streaming from his eyes he would shout, “I chant the names of Gaura and Nityānanda! I pray that I will not be a black spot to the holy name, that I will have no desires for the nonsense of *dharma-artha-kāma-mokṣa*!” Many times he requested, “Tell me what is written in the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. I don't know Sanskrit. I don't know reading and writing at all.” I would reply, “What should I say? I am seeing it graphically in your character. What else is there in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*?”

R. Babu deceptively took shelter of Mahāprabhu, as if to enrich Mahāprabhu, as if Mahāprabhu would be delivered by his mercy. He had perfect attachment to matter, not to Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Mahāprabhu revealed his duplicitous nature. R. Babu did not investigate this matter in the beginning. Not even for a moment did he see the real form of Mahāprabhu. He thought of the lotus feet of Śrī Gaurāṅga as some sort of special medicine or natural product. He thought of Mahāprabhu as a material substance for curing his daughter's illness. The lotus feet of Gaura-Nitāi remove all *anarthas* and bestow Kṛṣṇa-*prema.* They can bestow love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Their names are nondifferent from themselves. Gaura-Nitāi are not some magicians or talismans for removing disease. If he had obtained instructions from the lotus mouth of a guru who was a genuine Gaura-*bhakta,* the name alone would have bestowed mercy on him and elevated his heart.

> *vaikuṇṭha-nāma-grahaṇam aśeṣāgha-haraṁ viduḥ*
>
> Learned transcendentalists know that by chanting the holy name of the Lord, one is freed from the reactions of unlimited sins. (SB 6.2.14)

But to chant the name with a materialistic attitude produces great sin. R. Babu was committing *nāmāparādha*. His misfortune was a consequence of this offense. The result of *nāmāparādha* is either attainment or non-attainment of *dharma, artha,* and *kāma.* His desires were not fulfilled. If he sincerely accepts Gaurāṅga's lotus feet, his offense will dissolve. Then the name of Gaura will melt his heart, and tears will flow from his eyes. Then he will be able to understand these words of *jagad*-guru Śrīdhara Svāmī: "The affix *pra* [*pra ujjhita*] indicates the rejection of even the desire for liberation." *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* has uprooted all desires for liberation and material elevation. If one takes shelter of that Mahāprabhu who upheld *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as the most authoritative scripture, then neither cheating nor any other desires can remain.

The highest benefit tastes bitter, whereas temporary benefit tastes sweet. If a patient tells the doctor to give him sugar cakes instead of bitter medicine, then his accepting the doctor is merely a show. Similarly, there is no use to take refuge in the Lord while trying to increase one's disease. If we ignore the teachings of Śrī Caitanya, we transmogrify Him or His devotee into Satan. When we no longer strive for material benefits, our false devotion to Gaura will vanish.

We worship the Mahāprabhu praised by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī:

> *namo mahā-vadānyāya kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāya te*
> *kṛṣṇāya kṛṣṇa-caitanya- nāmne gaura-tviṣe namaḥ*
>
> Homage to the most munificent avatar, Kṛṣṇa Himself appearing as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu. You have assumed the golden color of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and are widely distributing Kṛṣṇa-*prema.* (Cc 2.19.53)

We worship the Mahāprabhu glorified by Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara:

heloddhūnita-khedayā viśadayā pronmīlad-āmodayā
śāmyac-chāstra-vivādayā rasa-dayā cittārpitonmādayā
śaśvad-bhakti-vinodayā sa-madayā mādhurya-maryādayā
śrī-caitanya dayā-nidhe tava dayā bhūyād amandodayā

O ocean of mercy, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu! Let there be a wakening of Your auspicious mercy, which easily drives away all kinds of lamentation by making everything pure and blissful. Indeed, Your mercy wakens transcendental bliss and eclipses all material pleasures. By Your auspicious mercy, quarrels and disagreements arising over different *śāstras* are vanquished. Your auspicious mercy pours forth transcendental mellows and thus causes the heart to exult. Your mercy, which is full of joy, always stimulates *bhakti* and glorifies the ultimate limit of *mādhurya-rasa.* By that causeless mercy of Yours, may transcendental bliss be wakened within my heart. (Cc 2.10.119)

We worship the Mahāprabhu glorified by Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī Prabhu:

kaivalyaṁ narakāyate tridaśa-pūr ākāśa-puṣpāyate
durdāntendriya-kāla-sarpa-paṭalī protkhāta-daṁṣṭrāyate
viśvaṁ pūrṇa-sukhāyate vidhi-mahendrādiś ca kīṭāyate
yat kāruṇya-kaṭākṣa-vaibhavavatāṁ taṁ gauram eva stumaḥ

For a devotee who has received Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's merciful glance, *kaivalya* (merging into the existence of Brahman) appears hellish, the heavenly planets appear like phantasmagoria, the senses appear like serpents with broken teeth, the entire world becomes a replica of Vaikuṇṭha, and the position of demigods like Brahmā and Indra is considered equal to that of tiny insects. We pray to that Lord, Śrī Gaurasundara.[5]

Most unfortunate are they who even after hearing the teachings of Mahāprabhu do not accept them. Gaurasundara is not the object of our enjoyment. Even though a person experiences thousands of misfortunes or calamities, he should hear about Gaurasundara, chant about Him, and preach about Him. All thoughts that now exist in this universe, existed in the past, or will exist in the future are no better than a few pennies. We should think, “When will we be able to take shelter of Gaurasundara's lotus feet with complete sincerity?” R. Babu did not understand that Gaurasundara is the Supreme Truth. He showed false *bhakti,* manifest in words alone, while taking refuge in Satan.

anarpita-carīṁ cirāt karuṇayāvatīrṇaḥ kalau
samarpayitum unnatojjvala-rasāṁ sva-bhakti-śriyam
hariḥ puraṭa-sundara-dyuti-kadamba-sandīpitaḥ
sadā hṛdaya-kandare sphuratu vaḥ śacī-nandanaḥ

May the Supreme Lord who is known as the son of Śrīmatī Śacīdevī be transcendentally

situated in the innermost chambers of your heart. Resplendent with the radiance of molten gold, He has appeared in Kali-yuga by His causeless mercy to bestow what no avatar has ever offered before: the most sublime and radiant mellow of *bhakti,* that of amatory love. (Cc 1.1.4)

Gaurasundara spread in this world the highest *rasa,* never given before, but I will instead pray for stool, urine, pus, flesh, and bones! Those who think Mahāprabhu is Satan pray for these things.

rādhā kṛṣṇa-praṇaya-vikṛtir hlādinī śaktir asmād
ekātmānāv api bhuvi purā deha-bhedaṁ gatau tau
caitanyākhyaṁ prakaṭam adhunā tad-dvayaṁ caikyam āptaṁ
rādhā-bhāva-dyuti-suvalitaṁ naumi kṛṣṇa-svarūpam

The loving affairs of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are transcendental manifestations of the Lord's internal pleasure-giving potency. Although Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are one in Their identity, They have eternally separated. Now these two transcendental identities have reunited, in the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. I bow to Him who has manifested Himself with the sentiment and complexion of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī although He is Kṛṣṇa Himself. (Cc 1.1.5)

The daughter of Vṛṣabhānu is not just the counterwhole or counterpart of Kṛṣṇa. The outer effulgence of Rādhā has completely covered the beauty of Śyāma. It has engulfed His mind. Such is the intensity of Their embrace. They have become this combined form. Śrī Gaurasundara is not simply Rādhā or simply Kṛṣṇa, but the embodiment of Their deep embrace.

prasārita-mahā-prema-pīyūṣa-rasa-sāgare
caitanya-candre prakaṭe yo dīno dīna eva saḥ

A person who does not take advantage of the great ocean of the nectar of *prema* during the presence of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is certainly the poorest of the poor.[6]

[Mr. Basu:] Please give me some practical suggestions. There are many theoretical options. How can one become free from *nāmāparādha*?

[Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura:] Please study *Hari-nāma-cintāmaṇi.*

[Mr. Basu:] Mahāprabhu said that we should give the name even to the lowest person.

[Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura:] A *nāmācārya,* a devotee free from *nāmāparādha* and *nāmābhāsa,* can give the name.

[Mr. Basu:] But then what is the meaning of *śraddhayā helayā vā:* the name can be chanted either with faith or inattention?[*]

[Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura:] It does not state to chant with *aparādha.* If one chants with offense, will it be beneficial?

[Mr. Basu:] But Mahāprabhu does not mention *nāmāparādha.*

[Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura:] You should read *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and the *Sandarbhas,* wherein *nāmāparādha* is mentioned throughout. *Niraparādhe nāma laile pāya prema-dhana:* "By chanting without offense one receives the treasure of *prema.*" [7] One cannot get the name from a false guru, a *nāmāparādhī,* but only by taking shelter of a pure *nāmācārya.* The guru will produce auspiciousness for his disciple. He will not think he has become successful by lording over him. He will not chant the name of Gaura-Nitāi while pursuing the path of materialism. Those who either enjoy or hate Gaura are offenders to the name and should be avoided.

[Mr. Basu:] If one is strict in chanting, will one get the name?

[Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura:] False chanting will not give the name. The real name reveals Himself, bestowing His own mercy. Those who do not attempt to understand this will commit *aparādha.* But even once chanting the real name can confer the greatest benefit.

[Mr. Basu:] How can I chant the real name once?

[Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura:] *Ādau guru-pādāśrayaḥ:* "One should first surrender to a guru."[8]

[Mr. Basu:] The human guru is very limited. I may accept a guru, but who will the inhabitants of Africa, America, or New Zealand accept as *nāmācārya*?

[Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura:] They will receive a guru according to their qualification, just as some have received Christ. When they gain good fortune and search for a genuine guru, then after some births they will receive a guru.

For the time being, you stop and lend your submissive and regardful ear. I say to everyone of this world, "Stop your other talks and listen to this message." I am an emissary of transcendental sound, not *aparādha.* I am neither ready to commit nor make others commit *aparādha.* If I proceed with all the rubbish that I have accumulated till now on my head, I will be unable to advance one inch toward Vraja. Just for some time, suspend the words of those who are famous as giant intellects of this world and hear transcendental sound. Empiricism must never be the medium. *Bhakti* is not a suggestive hit-or-miss matter; it is positive, a crystalline delineation of reality. *Bhakti* is ascertained as obedience to the Personal Godhead:

avismṛtiḥ kṛṣṇa-padāravindayoḥ
kṣiṇoty abhadrāṇi ca śaṁ tanoti
sattvasya śuddhiṁ paramātma-bhaktiṁ
jñānaṁ ca vijñāna-virāga-yuktam

Constant remembrance of Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet destroys everything inauspicious and awards the utmost fortune. It purifies the heart and bestows devotion to the Supreme Soul, along with knowledge enriched with realization and renunciation. (SB 12.12.56)

Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura said:

bhaktis tvayi sthiratarā bhagavan yadi syād
daivena naḥ phalati divya-kiśora-mūrtiḥ
muktiḥ svayaṁ mukulitāñjaliḥ sevate 'smān
dharmārtha-kāma-gatayaḥ samaya-pratīkṣāḥ

O Lord, if we develop unflinching *bhakti* unto You, then automatically Your transcendental youthful form is revealed to us. Thus liberation herself waits with joined palms to serve us, and dharma, *artha,* and *kāma* patiently wait to render service to us.[9]

In the beginning there was no need for us to have a mission, but since many people were going astray, we are using this mission to engage in the Lord's service and deliver human society from the wrong course. Even if the present style of worldly enjoyment were to reach a million times more intensity, still we would reject it like stool and urine. May humanity be delivered from its wrong direction and be established at the lotus feet of Śrī Gaurasundara, the root of all auspiciousness. We are making some meager attempt for that. If anyone, be he even a demigod like Śiva, Vāyu, Varuṇa, or Brahmā, or a great leader or preacher of dharma, is one hairbreadth separate from the teachings of Śrī Caitanya-deva, he will encounter reversals.

A servant of Śrī Caitanya is the worshiper of the Supreme Absolute Truth. The servant of Caitanya neither yearns for nor fears the talks of those whom the giant intellects of this world glorify as influential preachers of dharma, because he has seen the great beauty of Śrī Gaurāṅga's lotus feet. For devotees of Gaura the poisonous fangs of material enjoyment have been broken. No type of legerdemain can fool those into whose ears the teachings of Śrī Gaurasundara have entered:

kaivalyaṁ narakāyate tridaśa-pūr ākāśa-puṣpāyate
durdāntendriya-kāla-sarpa-paṭalī protkhāta-daṁṣṭrāyate
viśvaṁ pūrṇa-sukhāyate vidhi-mahendrādiś ca kīṭāyate
yat kāruṇya-kaṭākṣa-vaibhavavatāṁ taṁ gauram eva stumaḥ

For a devotee who has received Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's merciful glance, *kaivalya* (merging into the existence of Brahman) appears hellish, the heavenly planets appear like phantasmagoria, the senses appear like serpents with broken teeth, the entire world becomes a replica of Vaikuṇṭha, and the position of demigods like Brahmā and Indra is considered equal to that of tiny insects. We pray to that Lord, Śrī Gaurasundara.[10]

Patañjali's path of yoga, artificial endeavors to control the senses, or the affairs of Menakā and Urvaśī can never help one attain the position of a devotee of the Lord.[*] Those who take a

pessimistic view and think it very difficult to be freed from suffering are unable to reach the shoe-bearers of the Lord's devotees. Vaiṣṇavas do not regard privation to be very significant; nor do they entirely shun material knowledge, like a weaver putting cotton in his ears. They do not desire their own pleasure. My own pleasure will take me to hell, for I am a sick animal. My desire is to give pleasure to the Lord. The haven of Gaurasundara's lotus feet cannot be attained by bringing worldly acquisitions. Yet if one can utilize those objects in service to His lotus feet, then that is beneficial.

kālaḥ kalir balina indriya-vairi-vargāḥ
śrī-bhakti-mārga iha kaṇṭaka-koṭi-ruddhaḥ
hā hā kva yāmi vikalaḥ kim ahaṁ karomi
caitanya-candra yadi nādya kṛpāṁ karoṣi

It is Kali-yuga, and our enemies the senses are powerful. In this world, the path of *bhakti* is spiked with millions of thorny obstacles. O Caitanya-candra, if You do not bestow Your mercy on me today, then being confused, where will I go and what will I do?[11]

"I will reside alone and chant the names of Gaura-Nitāi"—this is another brand of deception, a desire for personal happiness and fame. All the senses are classed as enemies. All these enemies have sprung up as a million thorns to obstruct the path of *bhakti,* the eternal function of the soul, as taught by Lord Caitanya. People mistakenly adjudge *bhakti* as that kind of sham devotion that is mixed with *karma, jñāna,* and *yoga,* with all varieties of other desires for enjoyment or with false renunciation. But I will serve the Lord beyond the material realm. I will not be a scavenger, openly or stealthily serving the dog of sensual indulgence. I will not be a washerman serving his donkey. I will not be an engineer serving pieces of brick. Only one who considers like this can gain Mahāprabhu's affection and take shelter of the *bhakti* path.

Śrī Gaurasundara is not some fenced-in inanimate object. Only by His mercy can one be delivered from the normal material intelligence that has opposed the Lord since time immemorial—there is no other method. One should understand that those who make a show of giving mercy to others are simply cheaters. They do not continually chant the name or pastimes of Gaura. So how can they perform service to guru? All those who are attached to some teeny dharma or measly material object can perform the duty of a classroom teacher but not that of a guru from the spiritual kingdom.

kibā vipra kibā nyāsī śūdra kene naya
yei kṛṣṇa tattva vettā sei guru haya

Whether one is a *brāhmaṇa, sannyāsī,* or *śūdra*—regardless of what he is—he can become a guru if he knows the science of Kṛṣṇa. (Cc 2.8.128).

Worldy actions arising from the three *guṇas* have thrown me into difficulty. The guru is he who, by giving a blow to the sensitive spot, can cut the knot in the heart, he who is capable of guileless compassion, and who is not preoccupied with flattering me. He can give mercy to me

directly, without deceit. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* states:

> *labdhvā sudurlabham idaṁ bahu-sambhavānte*
> *mānuṣyam artha-dam anityam apīha dhīraḥ*
> *tūrṇaṁ yateta na pated anu-mṛtyu yāvan*
> *niḥśreyasāya viṣayaḥ khalu sarvataḥ syāt*
>
> After many, many births and deaths, one achieves this rare human form of life, which although temporary affords an opportunity to attain the highest perfection. Thus as long as his body, which is always subject to death, has not fallen and died, a sober human being should quickly endeavor for the ultimate perfection of life. Sense gratification is available in all species of life, whereas Kṛṣṇa consciousness is possible only for a human being. (SB 11.9.29)

I do not want to become a demigod. Humans, being familiar with particular sorrows, are superior to demigods. The demigods are so bloated with happiness that they are unaware of suffering and are preparing for a long ride on the merry-go-round of karma. To deliver the humans, the Lord sends great personalities in human form. They rescue mankind afflicted by the three miseries and send them to the kingdom of God. The mailman who bears the Lord's message, His personal messenger, can perform the function of guru.

A person's madness will certainly increase if he enters the chamber of aristocracy, power, learning, and beauty. Until one gives up all these types of pride, the names of Gaura and Nityānanda will not issue from his mouth. From whose mouth do the names of Harā and Kṛṣṇa come?* In this regard *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.8.26 and 2.1.11) states:

> *janmaiśvarya-śruta-śrībhir edhamāna-madaḥ pumān*
> *naivārhaty abhidhātuṁ vai tvām akiñcana-gocaram*
>
> My Lord, You can be approached only by those who are materially exhausted. One on the path of material progress, trying to improve himself with respectable parentage, opulence, high education, and bodily beauty, cannot approach You with sincere feeling.
>
> *etan nirvidyamānānām icchatām akuto-bhayam*
> *yoginām nṛpa nirṇītaṁ harer nāmānukīrtanam*
>
> O King, constant chanting of the holy name of the Lord in the manner of great authorities is the doubtless and fearless way of success for all, including those who are free from material desires, those who desire all material enjoyment, and those who are self-satisfied by dint of transcendental knowledge.

Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhu has stated that only *nāma-prabhu* is fit to be taken shelter of, since that name is the sole object of worship for liberated souls. The name is worshiped both by those who are not liberated—those aspiring for *dharma, artha,* and *kāma*—and by liberated souls

who possess love for the name. Only those chanters of the name who are focused solely on Gaura's lotus feet can say that they are ready to reject like stool and urine all methods created by men and accept only the name:

> O Harināma Prabhu, you are not featureless. You have lotus feet, lotus face, name, form, qualities, associates, and pastimes. The *Upaniṣads,* the supreme section of the Vedas, constantly perform *ārati* to the tips of your lotus feet.[12]

If you think you can remain an enjoyer and simultaneously chant the name of Gaura, you will not be chanting the names of Gaura-Nityānanda. Those who fix limits have been tempted by finite things. They have been bewitched by an apparition. The holy name will not come from their mouths, but only from the mouths of liberated souls. At present our souls are sleeping. If I am awakened I will hear only talks of Kṛṣṇa and then I will chant. I will associate only with those who chant the glories of Kṛṣṇa:

> *satāṁ prasaṅgān mama vīrya-saṁvido*
> *bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ*
> *taj-joṣaṇād āśv apavarga-vartmani*
> *śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati*
>
> In the association of pure devotees, discussion of the pastimes and activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very pleasing and satisfying to the ear and heart. By cultivating such knowledge one gradually becomes advanced on the path of liberation, and thereafter is freed and his attachment becomes fixed. Then *bhakti* begins. (SB 3.25.25)
>
> *tato duḥsaṅgam utsṛjya satsu sajjeta buddhimān*
> *santa evāsya chindanti mano-vyāsaṅgam uktibhiḥ*
>
> An intelligent person should reject all bad association and instead associate with saintly devotees, whose words cut off the excessive attachment within one's mind. (SB 11.26.26)

He is the genuine sadhu whose sword in the form of instructions remains always whetted for ritually butchering, as if at a sacrificial post, the tendencies for enjoyment and renunciation.

> *tad-vijñānārthaṁ sa gurum evābhigacchet*
>
> To understand the living entities' constitutional position, one must approach a guru. (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.2.12)
>
> *tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā*
> *upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ*
>
> Try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and

render service to him. Self-realized souls can impart knowledge unto you because they have seen the truth. (Bg 4.34)

He is my guru who has no dharma other than serving the lotus feet of his guru, who has no other consciousness or philosophy than this. He is preoccupied neither with hearing about enjoyment nor cramming his esophagus with delectable food. He never hears anything except Hari-*kathā*. He does not give advice other than to serve Hari. He does not perform any other activity, not even for one second out of twenty-four hours. Such a person is qualified as guru.

One day Mr. P. and Mr. S. of Kalighat implored me to take them for *darśana* of my guru, which I did. One of them entreated him, "Please give me mercy." My *gurudeva* responded, "Stay here." Mr. P. said, "But I have a return ticket." Gurudeva asked, "If you cannot give up a return ticket to the material world, how can you strive for the object worshiped by exalted persons such as Brahmā and Śiva?" From these words of my *gurudeva* I could comprehend the meaning of the Vedic word *abhigacchet* (approach).* One action, one statement, of my *gurudeva* captured the meaning of the Vedas, the *Bhāgavatam,* and the *Gītā*. I understood from my *gurudeva* that just as when one is lighting a fire he should not be distracted by other activities and allow it to go out, one should perform no activity save hearing and chanting about the Lord. One must associate with devotees in that way. Association does not mean to hear chitchat about material things. Going to a devotee to get praise or material assets is not the way to attain his guileless mercy, although one may be thus cheated by him if one wishes to be so cheated. On one hand a Vaiṣṇava is most merciful, and on the other is a cheater. I saw that in my guru. To persons whom he intuited might create considerable obstacles to his *bhajana,* he gave in profuse quantity various articles and money that had been presented by others and gave opportunities for them to be honored.

By intimate association with devotees, the concepts of anthropomorphism and apotheosis are destroyed. Apotheosis is the attempt to make a minion of *māyā* into a guru. Gaurasundara's lotus feet can never be approached by one with an enjoying mentality. Though He is not present on this earth in manifest pastimes, if with complete sincerity I continue to associate with the real guru, I can dovetail my consciousness with Gaurasundara's. By such excellent association I will gain great benefit.

An insincere hypocrite cannot be a guru. A person whose aspiration is for mundane activity can never be a guru. The pseudo-guru should be turned out and exposed. If in the name of teaching surrender to the Lord, the so-called guru harnesses his disciple to facilitate getting his daughter married, or for constructing his house, or for boosting his wealth, prestige, or opportunity for associating with women, then one should consider him a thug to be wholly rejected. One should hear nothing from such rascals. Whoever usurps objects meant for serving the supreme enjoyer is never fit to be called a guru.

īhā yasya harer dāsye karmaṇā manasā girā
nikhilāsv apy avasthāsu jīvan-muktaḥ sa ucyate

A person who serves Kṛṣṇa with body, mind, intelligence, and words is a liberated person even within the material world, although he apparently performs many material activities. (Brs 1.2.187)

Even if an atheist is eager to perform social service, still one should not associate with him. Such persons can never attain realization of God or the soul. By rendering social service one will plummet into the pothole of his own *māyā* and lead others into disastrous circumstances.

First comes *śraddhā,* then *rati,* then *bhakti.* When *sādhana* has not begun, there first appears faith. When *sādhana* is completed there is *rati.* After being situated in *sādhya* there is *bhakti,* or *prema.* Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda has sung:

kṛpā koro vaiṣṇava ṭhākura
sambandha jāniyā, bhajite bhajite,
abhimāna hau dūra

Please be merciful, O revered devotee. Then only will my false ego go far away, by constant worship in full knowledge of my real eternal position. (*Kalyāṇa-kalpataru*)

For him who performs genuine Viṣṇu-*sevā,* nothing is ever auspicious except such *sevā.* Presently we have developed a tie of love with finite things. We take to be necessary things that are not:

yasyātma-buddhiḥ kuṇape tri-dhātuke
sva-dhīḥ kalatrādiṣu bhauma ijya-dhīḥ
yat-tīrtha-buddhiḥ salile na karhicij
janeṣv abhijñeṣu sa eva go-kharaḥ

One who identifies with the inert body composed of mucus, bile, and air, who assumes that his wife and family are permanently his own, who thinks that an earthen image or the land of his birth is worshipable, who sees a place of pilgrimage as merely the water there, and who never identifies with, feels kinship with, worships, or even visits those who are wise in spiritual truth—such a person is no better than a cow or an ass [or: is like an ass that carries grass and other food for cows]. (SB 10.84.13)

We do not associate with any person who does not directly see Gaurasundara or Kṛṣṇa with each utterance of those names, who makes a big noise while pulling on his beads as if pulling the reins of a horse as he goes searching for God. Relationship with Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate limit of scholarship.

varaṁ huta-vaha-jvālā- pañjarāntar-vyavasthitiḥ
na śauri-cintā-vimukha- jana-saṁvāsa-vaiśasam

It is better to accept the miseries of being encaged within bars and surrounded by flames

than to associate with those bereft of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Such association is a very trying hardship.[13]

If I have genuine inclination to serve the Lord, I will see the whole world as ingredients for His service. Then a painting by Raphael cannot captivate me. I will understand that the songs of Vidyāpati and Caṇḍīdāsa are incomprehensible to persons possessed of *anarthas.* In Navadvīpa, some people try to enjoy the melodies and poetry of Caṇḍīdāsa and Vidyāpati as mundane romantic tales. Śrīnivāsa Ācārya Prabhu began a tradition of singing, but not for the sense satisfaction of materialistic types or for belly-maintenance. Those who do not realize this become pierced with the arrow of lust, like a deer enchanted by the hunter's song. Such persons become animals and ghosts and go to hell. They will ornament hell. With this attitude, crazed for satisfying their senses, they do not hear the devotees' words. Śrīnivāsa Ācārya Prabhu and Śrī Vakreśvara Paṇḍita introduced this tradition of singing for the purpose of cheating these animals in human form.

Persons who ultimately confirm themselves as impersonalists possess counterfeit coins of *bhakti;* their *bhakti* is fake. Members of *sampradāyas* that promote mundane desires idolize such trifling persons. This is called apotheosis. Devotees of Gaura do not subscribe to apotheosis. They are not flatterers. They are eternal servants of the *viṣaya-vigraha,* who is embraced by the *āśraya-vigraha.* This is the unique aspect of the teachings regarding Gaura-*bhajana.*

Eleven

To Be a Vraja-vāsī

On 8 October 1932 in Mathurā, in the presence of pilgrims assembled for the upcoming Vraja-maṇḍala Parikramā, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī requested Śrīmad Bhakti Vilāsa Gabhastinemi Mahārāja to sing from Prārthanā *the song beginning* āra kabe pālaṭibe daśā *and then himself explained some words from the song. The following extracts from that speech were published in the* Gauḍīya *11.218–21.*

Bhramiba dvādaśa bane rasakeli ye ye sthāne: "I will wander throughout the twelve forests of Vraja, to all the places of nectarean pastimes." Śrī Gaurasundara said, *anyera hṛdaya—mana, mora mana—vṛndāvana:* "For others, the mind and heart are one, yet because My mind is never separated from Vṛndāvana, I consider My mind and Vṛndāvana one."[1]

Rasa arises in the pure mind from the mixing of the four elements *vibhāva, anubhāva, sāttvika,* and *vyabhicārī-bhāva,* with the *sthāyi-bhāva rati.*[*] Kṛṣṇa, the very form of all *rasas,* is completely satisfied when the five major *rasas* nourished by the seven secondary *rasas*, skirting the method of contemplation, manifest in a most amazing deep form within the heart blazing with *sattva.* Such a heart, called the "forest," is a receptacle of, and serves as the support for, the twelve *rasas*. Wherever *rāsa-līlā* was performed has become smeared with *rasa* and flooded with *prema.* If a particle of any other desire occludes like a dam the current of *rasa,* the fountain of *rasa* cannot properly flow. The description and details of the appearance of material *rasas* in the unconscious receptacle, the material mind, which gives rise to thoughts, can be found in *Bhāva-prakāśa, Sāhitya-darpaṇa,* or the *rasa-śāstra* of Bharata Muni. *Rasas* that arise from reading of heroes and heroines in such stories as *Naiṣadha-carita,* Sāvitrī-Satyavān, Śani's *Pāñcālī,* Othello and Desdemona, or the story of Nala, are merely impermanent material emotions. In those affairs the subject of *rasa* is not the unsurpassable Lord who has no equal. But the subject of *rasa* in the twelve forests is Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Absolute Truth, the form of all *rasas*. He is the only subject of genuine *rasa*. The subject of the five *rasas—śānta, dāsya, sakhya, vātsalya,* and *mādhurya*—is only Śrī Vrajendra-nandana.

Sudhāiba jane jane vraja-vāsī-gaṇa-sthāne nivediba caraṇa dhariyā: "I will clutch the feet of each Vraja-*vāsī* and supplicate him." Vraja-*vāsīs* know Kṛṣṇa because at every moment, uninterruptedly, they serve Him in pure love. The cows and calves serve Kṛṣṇa. Being toys for satisfying Kṛṣṇa's senses, they increase His pleasure. They are the play-dolls of His milking pastimes. Citraka, Raktaka, Patraka, Bakula and other servants serve Kṛṣṇa, His cows, and His mother and father. They wash Kṛṣṇa's feet with the spiritual water of the Yamunā, a liquid form of Brahman. When Kṛṣṇa returns from pasturing, all His limbs are covered with Vraja dust. At that time His servants wash Him with Yamunā water. What do Kṛṣṇa's cows know? They are actually very great sages. Those who after many births of austerity and reading the Vedas desired service to the Lord became cows in Vraja. They learned to serve Kṛṣṇa by giving milk.

They were not the so-called sages who study Vedānta. To attain Vraja-*vāsa* one must be subservient to all Vraja-*vāsīs*. Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhu said:

tan-nāma-rūpa-caritādi-sukīrtanānu-
smṛtyoḥ krameṇa rasanā-manasī niyojya
tiṣṭhan vraje tad-anurāgi-janānugāmī
kālaṁ nayed akhilam ity upadeśa-sāram

One should reside in Vraja, carefully chanting about Kṛṣṇa's name, form, qualities, associates, and pastimes, gradually meditating upon them till he can realize *preyaḥ* (that which is desired as presently enjoyable) and *śreyaḥ* (the long-term goal) as nondifferent. Regulating all endeavors conceived of by the mind, one should aspire to develop a particular kind of affection for Kṛṣṇa similar to that possessed by an inhabitant of Vraja. This is the essence of all instructions. (*Upadeśāmṛta* 8)*

Vraja-vāsī means a servant of Hari possessed of spiritual understanding— not an enjoyer of material objects who is averse to serving Him. If I am not subservient to Citraka, Patraka, and Bakula, if I am not a follower of Kṛṣṇa, if I become a material enjoyer subservient to the objects of the eyes and ears, then I do not live in Vraja and do not have spiritual love. "I am enjoying; this object is giving me pleasure"—that is called material enjoyment, the opposite of service to Kṛṣṇa. If I do not have love for such shelters of *dāsya-rasa* as Citraka, Raktaka, and Patraka, shelters of *sakhya-rasa* such as Śrīdāmā and Sudāmā, shelters of *vātsalya-rasa* like Nanda and Yaśodā, and shelters of *mādhurya-rasa* like Rūpa Mañjarī and others, then how can there be Vraja-*vāsa*? All of them are *nitya-siddha* Vraja-*vāsīs.*

Sudhāiba jane jane vraja-vāsī-gaṇa-sthāne: "I will inquire from every Vraja-*vāsī.*" One should ask about a particular *rasa* from one who possesses it. If I ask about *madhura-rasa* then you should take me to a Vraja-*vāsī* who exemplifies *madhura-rasa*. If you ask about it from those who have not associated with Lalitā and Viśākhā, or who have not met Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, they may start talking about the *rasa* of Rāvaṇa stealing Sītā, or of Nala and Damayantī. The *gopīs* asked about Kṛṣṇa from all the trees in Vṛndāvana:

cūta-priyāla-panasāsana-kovidāra
jambv-arka-bilva-bakulāmra-kadamba-nīpāḥ
ye 'nye parārtha-bhavakā yamunopakūlāḥ
śaṁsantu kṛṣṇa-padavīṁ rahitātmanāṁ naḥ

O *cūta*! O *priyāla*! O *panasa, āsana,* and *kovidāra*! O *jambu*! O *arka*! O *bilva, bakula,* and *āmra*! O *kadamba* and *nīpa,* and all you other plants and trees living by the banks of the Yamunā who have dedicated your very existence to the welfare of others! We *gopīs* have lost our minds, so please tell us where Kṛṣṇa has gone. (SB 10.30.9)

I heard that nowadays the *panasa* (jackfruit) trees in Vṛndāvana are not giving fruit. When Śrī Gaurasundara wandered in the forests in the medieval period, there were many Kabul

pomegranate trees lining the bank of the Yamunā. This is described in the *Anubhāṣya* [commentary on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*]. Jayadeva Prabhu has also mentioned this. The inhabitants of Vraja are of five types. The cows, bamboo, horn, flute, Yamunā, and the sand banks are Vraja-*vāsīs* in *śānta-rasa*.

We cannot attain Vraja-*vāsa* without the mercy of the Vraja-*vāsīs*. But why should they speak to us? How will we see them with material eyes? Because we are covered with pride and envy, they will not listen to what we say. Because we have no attachment for them, they do not speak to us. Why would the Vraja-*vāsīs* engaged in eternal spiritual pastimes speak to us? They say, "You are searching for material pleasure. Has Kṛṣṇa become a material object for your pleasure?" One cannot know about Vraja except through subservience to Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī and Śrī Rati Mañjarī. When we receive the mercy of Prabhu Nityānanda, on that very day we will understand the mercy of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī and Śrī Rati Mañjarī; otherwise:

prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ
ahaṅkāra-vimūḍhātmā kartāham iti manyate

The spirit soul bewildered by the influence of false ego thinks himself the doer of activities that are actually carried out by the three modes of material nature. (Bg 3.27)

Besotted in this way, we will not comprehend the verse:

sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja

Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. (Bg 18.66)

One encounters obstacles when approaching Kṛṣṇa in a spirit of averseness to serving Him. As a result of previous sins we worship many demigods. There cannot be good fortune without taking hold of the feet of those who serve Kṛṣṇa favorably. "I rambled in the Vṛndāvana forest"—if while doing so I ate a fruit from a tree, or smelled a flower, then at that time I was not walking in the forest but was simply committing offenses with my feet. *Govardhane nā uṭhio*—by these words it is understood not to place one's feet on Kṛṣṇa's body.[2] Without developing spiritual *sakhya-rasa* one cannot put his feet on Kṛṣṇa's shoulders; with false *sakhya-rasa* one cannot do so. We cannot wander in the forests of Vṛndāvana if we have the material enjoying mentality of a lucre-hunter.

How long will I live? Why should I perform other activities during those few days? Ṭhākura Narottama has stated:

haiyā māyāra dāsa kari nānā abhilāṣa
tomāra smaraṇa gela dūre
artha-lābha-ei āśe kapaṭa-vaiṣṇava-veśe
bhramiyā bulaye ghare ghare

> Having become a servant of *māyā,* I have unlimited desires. Remembrance of You has gone far away. Hoping to gain wealth, I roam from house to house, deceitfully dressed as a Vaiṣṇava.[3]

The characteristics of hypocrisy are described in the beginning of *Bhāgavatam:*

> *dharmaḥ projjhita-kaitavo 'tra paramo nirmatsarāṇāṁ satāṁ*
> *vedyaṁ vāstavam atra vastu śivadaṁ tāpa-trayonmūlanam*
>
> Completely rejecting all religious activities that are materially motivated, this *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* propounds the highest truth, understandable by those devotees who are fully pure in heart. That highest truth is reality distinguished from illusion, for the welfare of all, and it uproots the threefold miseries. (SB 1.1.2)

Herein *dharma, artha,* and *kāma* are kicked out. But sense enjoyers pray for these things. Other than Vedānta, the remaining five *darśanas* speak more or less of *artha, dharma,* and *kāma.* And impersonalists who imaginatively interpret Vedānta are competitors with the sense enjoyers. To fear variety in spiritual life because of varieties of problems in material life, as "a cow whose barn was burned fears a red cloud," merely engenders the same or even worse difficulties.

"We are studying *Tarka-śāstra* according to Śrī Jagadīśa and Śrī Gadādhara." Ānandagiri, who follows Śaṅkara's conclusion, Appayya Dīkṣita's *Nyāya-rakṣā-maṇi, Parimala, Ānanda-laharī,* and *Śivārka-maṇi-dīpikā,* Vācaspati Miśra's *Bhāmatī* along with Śaṅkara's commentary—anyone with such views can never comprehend the *nitya-siddha* Vraja-*vāsīs.* By worshiping dogs one becomes a *bhāṅgī;* by worshiping horses one becomes a groom; by worshiping iron one becomes a blacksmith; by worshiping gold one becomes a goldsmith.[*] To become a Vraja-*vāsī* one must attain exclusive service to the *nitya-siddha* Vraja-*vāsīs.*

Members of the thirteen *apa-sampradāyas* cannot comprehend the twelve transcendental *rasas*. Since the twelve *rasas* reside in Kṛṣṇa alone, how can they be found elsewhere? This is my question to all the *prākrta-sahajiyā* groups.

When we begin our search for Kṛṣṇa, first we must range throughout the entire universe searching for a Kārṣṇa. By not taking shelter of the lotus feet of *śuddha* Vaiṣṇavas, and by instead calling non-Vaiṣṇavas Vaiṣṇavas, we invite severe misfortune. While playing music, a performer might happen to get lockjaw; similarly, fools consider the outward gestures of pretenders to be *bhajana-siddhi.*

The purpose of attaining that worthy object of worship is to become completely absorbed in love of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is not a material object. Can one see Adhokṣaja Kṛṣṇa with the infected eye attached to material enjoyment, like the one that Bilvamaṅgala plucked out and discarded? Those who take Kṛṣṇa as their order supplier, or likewise think that the objects of their sense enjoyment are Kṛṣṇa—such persons' infected eyes will soon turn into a cataract, for these two

attitudes are obstacles to seeing the object of worship (Kṛṣṇa) and the place where He should be worshiped (Vraja).

In two verses Rūpa Gosvāmī has described the secret of *bhajana:*

> *anāsaktasya viṣayān yathārham upayuñjataḥ*
> *nirbandhaḥ kṛṣṇa-sambandhe yuktaṁ vairāgyam ucyate*
>
> Not being attached to anything yet properly using everything in relation to Kṛṣṇa is *yukta-vairāgya,* renunciation suitable for *bhakti.*
>
> *prāpañcikatayā buddhyā hari-sambandhi-vastunaḥ*
> *mumukṣubhiḥ parityāgo vairāgyaṁ phalgu kathyate*
>
> Renunciation, by persons desiring liberation, of items related to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, considering them material, is called *phalgu* (insignificant and worthless). (Brs 1.2.255–56)

According to worldly vision we should be either enjoyers or renouncers, considering the world either enjoyable or rejectable. As long as we hold such rascally conceptions we can bid farewell to eligibility for genuine *bhajana.*

Twelve

A Lecture at Rādhā-kuṇḍa

16 October 1932, during Vraja-maṇḍala Parikramā

The eighth instruction of Śrīla Rūpa Prabhu is the essence of all instructions:

> *tan-nāma-rūpa-caritādi-sukīrtanānu-*
> *smṛtyoḥ krameṇa rasanā-manasī niyojya*
> *tiṣṭhan vraje tad-anurāgi janānugāmī*
> *kālaṁ nayed akhilam ity upadeśa-sāram*[*]

We must remain ever subordinate to the Vraja-*vāsīs*. The Yamunā banks, which are the playground for Kṛṣṇa's amorous pastimes, the waters of the Yamunā, the cows, sticks, horns, and flutes—all are Vraja-*vāsīs* in *śānta-rasa*. Raktaka, Citraka, Patraka, and others are Vraja-*vāsīs* in *dāsya-rasa*. Externally making a show of residing in Vraja while internally thinking about material enjoyment unrelated to Kṛṣṇa cannot be called Vraja-*vāsa.* Vraja-*vāsīs* are those who cannot perform anything other than Kṛṣṇa's service, even in their dreams or while unconscious, and who have natural attachment for Kṛṣṇa. If one is unable to live physically in Vraja, he should live there mentally, meaning that he must always keep his mind absorbed in thoughts of Vraja. One must give up both material enjoyment and dry renunciation. According to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* neither an attached householder nor a dry renunciant can worship Hari.

We must follow the gradual path, beginning with hearing the holy names and Kṛṣṇa-*kathā.* Kṛṣṇa's holy name reveals Himself as the Lord's forms, qualities, pastimes, and associates. After hearing we must act accordingly; we must constantly chant what we have heard. Then *smaraṇa-daśā* (the state of remembrance) will come. There are five kinds of remembrance. The final stage of remembrance is called *samādhi* (uninterrupted recollection). After *smaraṇa-daśā* one attains *sampatti-daśā* (the stage of self-realization), after which one achieves the ultimate goal of life and goes back to Godhead.

One must properly glorify the Lord's name, form, and qualities. Showy *kīrtana* will not yield any result. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is stated:

> *śṛṇvataḥ śraddhayā nityaṁ gṛṇataś ca sva-ceṣṭitam*
> *kālena nātidīrgheṇa bhagavān viśate hṛdi*
>
> Persons who hear *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* regularly and are always taking the matter very seriously will have the Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, manifested in their hearts within a short time. (SB 2.8.4)

Trying to artificially remember the Lord by giving up *kīrtana* is not real *smaraṇa.* A pretense of *smaraṇa,* sans *kīrtana,* will leave one meditating on sense objects.

Śāstra describes two paths, *śreyas* and *preyas.* Whatever we like is the path of *preyas,* and what we do not like is that of *śreyas.* When *śreyas* and *preyas* consubstantiate, our hearts will rush toward Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's service. In that stage *śreyas* appears as *preyas,* and *preyas* as *śreyas.* This is the understanding of exalted devotees.

The phrase *tad-anurāgi* in the original verse refers to the Vraja-*vāsīs,* who are deeply attached to the Lord. The cows, sticks, horns, flute, *kadamba* trees, and banks of the Yamunā are deeply attached Vraja-*vāsīs* in *śānta-rasa*. Raktaka, Citraka, and Patraka, who are Nanda's house servants and tend Kṛṣṇa when He returns from the pasturing ground, are deeply attached Vraja-*vāsīs* in *dāsya-rasa*. Friends like Śrīdāmā or Sudāmā are deeply attached Vraja-*vāsīs* of *viśrambha-sakhya-rasa* (friendship with natural affection). Arjuna's conception of the Lord is mixed with knowledge of His Godhood and therefore is not pure friendship. There is a difference between *viśrambha-sakhya-rasa* and *gaurava-sakhya-rasa* (friendship with awe and reverence). In *viśrambha-sakhya-rasa*, Kṛṣṇa's friends climb on His shoulders, feed Him partially eaten palm fruits in Tālavana, fight with Him, and compel Him to carry them on His shoulders. But when Arjuna sees Kṛṣṇa's universal form he is struck with wonder and says, "O Lord, You are so opulent and great! I have committed an offense by addressing You as friend. Please forgive me." He spoke like this being overawed by Kṛṣṇa's opulence.

Personalities like Nanda and Yaśodā are deeply attached Vraja- *vāsīs* in *vātsalya-rasa*. Śrī Raghupati Upādhyāya, a disciple of Śrī Mādhavendra Purī, said:

> *śrutim apare smṛtim itare bhāratam anye bhajantu bhava-bhītāḥ*
> *aham iha nandaṁ vande yasyālinde paraṁ brahma*
>
> Some who are afraid of material existence worship *śruti,* others worship *smṛti,* and yet others worship *Mahābhārata.* I worship Mahārāja Nanda, in whose courtyard the Personality of Godhead, the Supreme Absolute Truth, is playing. (*Padyāvalī* 126, quoted as Cc 2.19.96)

The Vraja-*gopīs* are deeply attached Vraja-*vāsīs* in the topmost *mādhurya-rasa*. Gravely afflicted by separation from Kṛṣṇa, when they met Him at Kurukṣetra during a solar eclipse they said:

> *āhuś ca te nalina-nābha padāravindaṁ*
> *yogeśvarair hṛdi vicintyam agādha-bodhaiḥ*
> *saṁsāra-kūpa-patitottaraṇāvalambaṁ*
> *gehaṁ juṣām api manasy udiyāt sadā naḥ*
>
> Dear Lord, whose navel is like a lotus flower, Your lotus feet are the only shelter for those who have fallen into the deep well of material existence. Your feet are worshiped and

meditated upon by great mystic yogis and highly learned philosophers. We wish that these lotus feet be wakened also within our hearts, although we are only ordinary persons engaged in household affairs. (SB 10.82.48)

Materialists are motivated by a desire to become liberated from mundane life. Renunciant yogis practice meditation to realize the subtle principle. Surpassing these considerations is the superlative platform of devotional service found in the *gopīs* of Vraja. They are not prepared to serve Kṛṣṇa from a distance, like yogis who practice meditation. The *gopīs'* meditation is spontaneous and natural.

These above-mentioned five kinds of *rasas* are found in Goloka and the Vraja of this world. In Vaikuṇṭha there are two and a half kinds of *rasas: śānta, dāsya,* and *gaurava-sakhya. Viśrambha-sakhya* does not exist there.

In Śrī Rūpa Prabhu's ninth instruction, he determines the best place to perform *bhajana:*

vaikuṇṭhāj janito varā madhu-purī tatrāpi rāsotsavād
vṛndāraṇyam udāra-pāṇi-ramaṇāt tatrāpi govardhanaḥ
rādhā-kuṇḍam ihāpi gokula-pateḥ premāmṛtāplāvanāt
kuryād asya virājato giri-taṭe sevāṁ vivekī na kaḥ

Mathurā is spiritually superior to Vaikuṇṭha, the transcendental world, because the Lord appeared there. Superior to Mathurā-purī is the transcendental forest of Vṛndāvana, because of Kṛṣṇa's *rāsa-līlā.* Superior to the forest of Vṛndāvana is Govardhana Hill, for it was raised by the divine hand of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and was the site of His various loving pastimes. And above all, the superexcellent Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa stands supreme, for it is overflooded with the ambrosial nectarean *prema* of the Lord of Gokula, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Where then is that discriminating person unwilling to serve this divine Rādhā-kuṇḍa, which is situated at the foot of Govardhana Hill? (*Upadeśāmṛta* 9)

As surrendered maidservants of Śrī Rādhā, we must constantly live on the banks of Rādhā-kuṇḍa. In the conception of Nārāyaṇa there is no existence of progenitor and progenitrix, since He is unborn. Yet when that unborn Lord appears as the son of Devakī and Vasudeva in Mathurā, He performs the pastime of taking birth. The Lord of Vaikuṇṭha is unborn. But since that unborn Lord, due to His inconceivable potency, manifests His pastime of taking birth, His position as the Supreme Lord becomes more glorious. Therefore Mathurā is superior to Vaikuṇṭha. Lord Kṛṣṇa appears in the pure mind of a devotee. That pure mind is also Mathurā. Many people consider Mathurā a mythical place, like one described in fairy tales. Such a conclusion denies Kṛṣṇa's inconceivable potency, wherewith Mathurā appears along with Kṛṣṇa in this material world.

Vṛndāvana, where Kṛṣṇa enjoyed *rāsa-līlā,* is superior to Mathurā, where Kṛṣṇa took birth.

śrīmān rāsa-rasārambhī vaṁśīvaṭa-taṭa-sthitaḥ

karṣan veṇu-svanair gopīr gopīnāthaḥ śriye 'stu naḥ

Śrī Śrīla Gopīnātha, who originated the transcendental mellow of the *rāsa* dance, stands on the shore in Vaṁśīvaṭa and, with the sound of His celebrated flute, attracts the attention of the cowherd damsels. May they confer upon us their benedictions. (Cc 1.1.17)

In Mathurā, Kṛṣṇa enjoys His pastimes as a budding stripling. In the *rāsa-maṇḍala* He is a mature youth. Kṛṣṇa enjoyed *rāsa-līlā* with His different categories of *gopī* friends. When Śrī Rādhā arrived and saw that the special characteristics of Her service could not be exhibited in a *rāsa-līlā* with so many types of *gopīs,* She left the arena and went to Govardhana. Candrāvalī also arrived. Śrī Rādhā became dismayed when She saw Śrī Kṛṣṇa at Govardhana sitting in a cave with Candrāvalī. After tactfully deceiving Candrāvali's messenger Śaibyā, Rādhā's *gopī* friends Tulasī, Dhaniṣṭhā, and others sent Candrāvalī to Sakhīsthalī. That is why Śrīla [Raghunātha] dāsa Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, who was a staunch follower of Śrī Rūpa, offered *daṇḍavat* to Sakhīsthalī from a distance. After deceiving Candrāvalī, Śrī Rādhā's followers brought Śyāmasundara to Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

Śrī Govardhana, where Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's most confidential amorous pastimes take place, is superior to Vṛndāvana. In his "Govardhanāśraya-daśakam" (6) Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī wrote:

yasyāṁ mādhava-nāviko rasavatīm ādhāya rādhāṁ tarau
madhye cañcala-keli-pāta-valanāt trāsaiḥ stuvatyās tataḥ
svābhiṣṭhaṁ paṇam ādadhe vahati sā yasmin mano-jāhnavī
kas taṁ tan nava-dam-pati-pratibhuvaṁ govardhanaṁ nāśrayet

Who will not take shelter of Govardhana Hill, where the divine couple enjoy Their pastime of the rescue fee, below which is situated Mānasa-gaṅgā, the lake in which the pilot Mādhava took sweet beautiful Rādhā on His boat? When upon being frightened by a great storm She prayed that He calm it, He claimed from Her as a toll the fulfilment of His amative desires.

Rādhā-kuṇḍa is superior to Govardhana because it is fully flooded with nectarean love of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, who understood Caitanya Mahāprabhu's concealed intention, instructed that service to Rādhā-kuṇḍa, the highest object of Śrī Gaurahari's internal mood, is the ultimate goal of all service. Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa is totally incomprehensible and unattainable by followers of the Nimbārka *sampradāya*, followers of any *sampradāya* under Candrāvalī's guidance, or so-called followers of *mādhurya-rasa* who are devoid of devotion to Gaura. Therefore Śrīla [Raghunātha] dāsa Gosvāmī wrote in his *Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍāṣṭaka* (2):

vraja-bhuvi mura-śatroḥ preyasīnāṁ nikāmair
asulabham api tūrṇaṁ prema-kalpa-drumaṁ tam
janayati hṛdi bhūmau snātur uccaiḥ priyaṁ yat
tad ati-surabhi rādhā-kuṇḍam evāśrayo me

May very dear and fragrant Rādhā-kuṇḍa, which for one who bathes therein immediately creates in the land of the heart a desire tree of pure love rarely found even among the *gopī* beloveds of Lord Kṛṣṇa in Vraja, be my shelter.

In his tenth instruction Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī has ascertained who among the devotees is best:

karmibhyaḥ parito hareḥ priyatayā vyaktiṁ yayur jñāninas
tebhyo jñāna-vimukta-bhakti-paramāḥ premaika-niṣṭhās tataḥ
tebhyas tāḥ paśu-pāla-paṅkaja-dṛśas tābhyo 'pi sā rādhikā
preṣṭhā tadvad iyaṁ tadīya-sarasī tāṁ nāśrayet kaḥ kṛtī

Śāstra states that of all types of fruitive workers, one advanced in knowledge of the higher values of life is favored by Hari. Out of many such people advanced in knowledge (*jñānīs*), one who is practically liberated by virtue of his knowledge may take to devotional service; he is superior to the others. But one who has actually attained *prema* is better still. The *gopīs* are exalted above all other advanced devotees because they are always totally dependent upon Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the transcendental cowherd boy. Among the *gopīs,* Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is dearest to Kṛṣṇa. Her *kuṇḍa* is as profoundly dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa as is this most beloved of the *gopīs.* Who then will not take shelter of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa? Those who do so are the most fortunate persons in the universe. (*Upadeśāmṛta* 10)

Only the most fortunate live with pure hearts in the most sanctified place, Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa, and worship Kṛṣṇa twenty-four hours a day. Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa is the highest section of Goloka, the most confidential place in the spiritual sky, and the only shelter for devotees on the platform of *mādhurya-rasa*.

The planetary systems Bhū, Bhuvar, and Svar are meant for pious householders. Above them are the planetary systems Mahar, Jana, Tapa, and Satya, meant for the celibates. *Upakurvāṇa-brahmacārīs* live in Maharloka, *naiṣṭhika-brahmacārīs* attain Janaloka, *vānaprasthas* attain Tapaloka, and sannyasis enjoy in Satyaloka. The *Bhagavad-gītā* states:

ā-brahma-bhuvanāl lokāḥ punar āvartino 'rjuna
mām upetya tu kaunteya punar janma na vidyate

From the highest planet in the material world to the lowest, all are places of misery wherein repeated birth and death take place. But one who attains to My abode, O son of Kuntī, never takes birth again. (Bg 8.16)

The ecstatic spiritual abode of Vaikuṇṭha is rarely attained even by liberated souls. Immediately after leaving their corporal tabernacles, the Lord's devotees who are free from material desire attain that abode. Mathurā is superior to Vaikuṇṭha; Vṛndāvana, the abode of the *rāsa-līlā,* is superior to Mathurā; Govardhana is superior to Vṛndāvana; and Rādhā-kuṇḍa is the best of all.

Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī Prabhu's explanation that the Lord's abode is three-fourths of the creation is most scientific.[1] The impersonal Brahman is situated beyond the Causal Ocean. Impersonalists think that ultimately there is nothing there. They suppose that all the "imaginary" gods as well as the "imaginary" form of Brahman will be merged, having become one. *Hayaśīrṣa-pañcarātra* states:

> *yā yā śrutir jalpati nirviśeṣaṁ*
> *sā sābhidhatte sa-viśeṣam eva*
> *vicāra-yoge sati hanta tāsāṁ*
> *prāyo balīyaḥ sa-viśeṣam eva*
>
> Whatever Vedic mantras describe the Absolute Truth as impersonal, ultimately prove only that the Absolute Truth is a person. The Supreme Lord is understood in two features, impersonal and personal. If one considers the Supreme Personality of Godhead in both features, he can actually understand the Absolute Truth. He knows that the personal understanding is stronger, because he can see that everything is full of variety. Everything has its own unique characteristics.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu says:

> *'nirviśeṣa' tāṅre kahe yei śruti-gaṇa*
> *'prākṛta' niṣedhi kare 'aprākṛta' sthāpana*
>
> Impersonal descriptions in the Vedas are meant to establish that everything in spiritual existence is transcendental and free of mundane characteristics. (Cc 2.6.141)

Impersonalists think they have overcome material variety and that spiritual variety must similarly be rejected. The abode of the impersonal Brahman lies on the other side of the Causal Ocean. The concept of the Brahman effulgence arises after washing off the three modes of material nature. But, *jyotir-abhyantare rūpam atulaṁ śyāmasundaram:* "Within the effulgence is the beautiful and incomparable form of Lord Śyāmasundara."[2]

Vaikuṇṭha possesses spiritual variety. There are two and a half *rasas* found there. The Supreme Lord is omnipotent; both matter and spirit are under His control. This is the philosophy taught by Śrī Rāmānuja. The Lord is the proprietor of the material and spiritual energies.

[Question:] Sometimes we become confused about *prayojana-tattva* when speaking with persons who do not know the difference between mundane and spiritual *rasas.* Would you please help us?

[Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's reply:] Nondevotees want to enjoy this material world, but devotees have a different mentality; they want neither to enjoy nor renounce the world. There are many sense enjoyers but only one Supreme Lord. *Lakṣmī-sahasra-śata-sambhrama-sevyamānam:* "The Lord is served by hundreds of thousands of *lakṣmīs* or *gopīs.*"[3] There is a difference

between worship with awe and reverence and service with love and devotion.

After achieving perfection, when we give up the body awarded by our parents we will attain uninterrupted devotional service to Bhagavān. Bhagavān is supremely independent; everyone must respect His supreme will. Rules are prescribed for those whose propensity to serve the Lord has not yet been wakened, who are entangled with their gross and subtle bodies. Do not make a pretense. There is no value in pretending to act in one's constitutional position while still conditioned by the gross and subtle body. That is the behavior of a *prākṛta-sahajiyā.*

The subject matter of ornamental literature like *Kāvya-prakāśa* or *Sāhitya-darpaṇa* is mundane. Such books describe affairs between man and woman, or a number of men and women together. If the two and a half types of *rasas* are applied to the Lord, and the rest are applied to the abominable natures lived out by forgetful living entities, the consideration of *rasa* remains truncated. Five *rasas* are fully manifest in the complete kingdom of God, Goloka. The transcendental *gopīs* are not concerned with superiority or inferiority, or whether they are mature or immature girls. They serve Kṛṣṇa with all their limbs and senses. Those sages who could not attain perfection in their worship of the Supreme tried to do so by seeing Śrī Rāmacandra's beauty, but since Lord Rāma vowed to accept only one wife it was impossible for them to achieve their goal. Therefore, as described in *Padma Purāṇa,* they took birth as *gopīs* in Vraja. Among them, a few attained perfection at the beginning of the *rāsa-līlā,* as confirmed by *Bṛhad-Vāmana Purāṇa.* When the personified *Upaniṣads* were struck with wonder upon seeing the *gopīs'* good fortune, then as a result of the *Upaniṣads'* own intense worship they too appeared in Vraja as *gopīs.* If one ponders from a neutral viewpoint, he will find that the *gopīs*' love in *mādhurya-rasa* is far superior to and more wonderful than the love of *śānta-, dāsya-,* and *sakhya-rasas*.

Among the *gopīs* Śrī Rādhikā is supreme. She is principal among the group leaders headed by Lalitā and Viśākhā. By great good fortune one gets entry into Lalitā's group. That is why today those who desire to circumambulate Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa try to live on the banks of Lalitā-kuṇḍa. Some people adjudge Candrāvalī as the leading *gopī,* but the highest achievement is to gain an opportunity to surrender as a maidservant to Śrī Rādhā, the personification of *mahābhāva.* Śrī Rādhā's name is mentioned only covertly in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* because the author feared that this literature would fall into the hands of materialists. Yet the most magnanimous Śrī Gaurasundara, and my spiritual master Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhu, have revealed information about Śrī Rādhā without hiding it from qualified devotees. *Padma Purāṇa* states:

> *yathā rādhā priyā viṣṇos tasyāḥ kuṇḍaṁ priyaṁ tathā*
> *sarva-gopīṣu saivaikā viṣṇor atyanta-vallabhā*
>
> Just as Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is dearest to Kṛṣṇa, Her *kuṇḍa* is similarly dear. Of all the *gopīs,* She is the most beloved of the Lord.

Only by Śrī Rādhā's mercy can one reside eternally on the banks of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, the superlative place in the entire creation. Therefore in his ultimate instruction Śrī Rūpa Prabhu

mentions bathing in Rādhā-kuṇḍa:

kṛṣṇasyoccaiḥ praṇaya-vasatiḥ preyasībhyo 'pi rādhā
kuṇḍaṁ cāsyā munibhir abhitas tādṛg eva vyadhāyi
yat preṣṭhair apy alam asulabhaṁ kiṁ punar bhakti-bhājāṁ
tat premedaṁ sakṛd api saraḥ snātur āviṣkaroti

Of the many objects of favored delight and of all the lovable damsels of Vrajabhūmi, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is certainly the most treasured object of Kṛṣṇa's love. And great sages describe Her divine *kuṇḍa* to be in every respect similarly dear to Him. Undoubtedly Rādhā-kuṇḍa is very rarely attained even by great devotees; therefore it is even more difficult for ordinary devotees to attain. If one simply bathes once within those holy waters, one's pure love of Kṛṣṇa is fully aroused. (*Upadeśāmṛta* 11)

"I have taken bath in Rādhā-kuṇḍa," "I took a dip in Rādhā-kuṇḍa," "I am a lump of flesh and blood," "I am my wife's maintainer," "I am a sannyasi," "I am a *brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya,* or *śūdra*"—thinking in any of these ways disqualifies one to bathe in Rādhā-kuṇḍa. What to speak of such materialistic conceptions, if we are filled with the attitude of awe and reverence we also cannot bathe in Rādhā-kuṇḍa. We have to tread the path of Śrī Rādhā's maidservants without imitating them as do the *sakhī-bhekīs*. Simply decorating a male body as if it were female does not qualify one to serve Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

[Question:] What is the difference between *paramahaṁsas* dressed in white and *tridaṇḍi-sannyāsīs*?

[Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's reply:] Some devotees in *vidhi-mārga* are encouraged to accept a *tridaṇḍa,* and those on the *rāga-mārga* to wear white cloth instead of red, to respect the *paramahaṁsas.* It is improper for devotees of the *rāga-mārga* to wear red. But if one harbors a cheating propensity in his spiritual life, then none of the prescribed paths will help. Despite maintaining material attachments in their heart, some devotees externally adopt the insignia of the *tridaṇḍa* and wearing red cloth. As a result, ignorant people have been deceived.

Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī wrote *Rādhā-rasa-sudhā-nidhi* and lived at Kāmyavana. He made an external show of observing *sannyāsa* while fostering *rāga* within his heart. The point is that one must forsake materialistic conceptions. After attaining the *aprākṛta* body of the *gopīs, aprākṛta* living entities render *aprākṛta* service to *aprākṛta* Śrī Rādhā in *aprākṛta* Vraja as the *aprākṛta* maidservants of Śrī Rādhā in the transcendental grove on the bank of *aprākṛta* Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja was a disciple of Śrīla Madhusūdana dāsa, who performed *bhajana* at Sūrya-kuṇḍa. In the conception of my spiritual master, who was a disciple of this Jagannātha dāsa, there was no tinge of materialism. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* states:

yasyātma-buddhiḥ kuṇape tri-dhātuke
sva-dhīḥ kalatrādiṣu bhauma ijya-dhīḥ

yat-tīrtha-buddhiḥ salile na karhicij
janeṣv abhijñeṣu sa eva go-kharaḥ

One who identifies with the inert body composed of mucus, bile, and air, who assumes that his wife and family are permanently his own, who thinks that an earthen image or the land of his birth is worshipable, who sees a place of pilgrimage as merely the water there, and who never identifies with, feels kinship with, worships, or even visits those who are wise in spiritual truth—such a person is no better than a cow or an ass [or: is like an ass that carries grass and other food for cows]. (SB 10.84.13)

By regarding ordinary water as sacred and the gross material body as the self, one can neither see nor bathe in Rādhā-kuṇḍa. *Prākṛta-sahajiyās* think they can bathe in Rādhā-kuṇḍa while adjudging the gross body to be the self, their wife and children as their own, imaginary objects as God, and an ordinary body of water as sacred, and without considering the pure devotees of the Lord their real well-wishers. Śrīman Mahāprabhu stated:

dīkṣā-kāle bhakta kare ātma-samarpaṇa
sei-kāle kṛṣṇa tāre kare ātma-sama

sei deha kare tāra cid-ānanda-maya
aprākṛta-dehe tāṅra caraṇa bhajaya

At the time of initiation, when a devotee fully surrenders unto the Lord's service, Kṛṣṇa accepts him to be as good as Himself. When the devotee's body is thus transformed into spiritual existence, in that transcendental body the devotee renders service to the lotus feet of the Lord. (Cc 3.4.192–93)

One's spiritual body manifests when the qualities of a Vaiṣṇava are manifested in his constitutional propensity.

Matter can never become spirit; spirit is eternally spirit. We need not bring our original spiritual consciousness down to the gross material conception. If the artificially dressed bodies of the *sakhī-bhekīs* are disrobed then their natural male bodies will be exposed. The topmost principle in the spiritual kingdom is to bathe in Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

Thirteen

A Lecture in Vṛndāvana

Delivered during Kārtika 1927 and featured in the July 1928 Harmonist *(26.2.33–36)*[1]

I have no capacity to tend the feet of the denizens of this holy place, yet by the grace of Śrī Gaurasundara and urged by your good wishes, I stand here to speak only if thereby I may serve the servants of Śrī Gaurāṅga. Indeed, if we can truly serve the feet of His devotees, by whose graceful glance alone all desires, hopes, and aims in life are easily fulfilled, then that will be a crowning achievement.

We are proud of our egos. We are given either to judge sinful and pious acts, or scheme how we can dominate others by acquiring power. These are all base self-glorifications. But one devoted to Gaurāṅga says that all desires actuating every object, from a clump of grass to the highest being, Brahmā, all labor for worldly possessions, all longing for enjoyment, and every kind of renunciation after satiety are all pseudo-existent and evanescent, being subject to change and time. When we lose anything so acquired, life seems vacant and useless, yet such being the end of all enjoyments in the fourteen spheres, it is quite futile to try to straighten the tail of a dog. All pleasures acquired as the fruits of worldly work are transitory.

Carried away by sense perceptions of eye, ear, touch, taste, and sound, we turn into ego worshipers. In this state the pure activity of the soul lies dormant. Then we desire pleasure in heaven. And when such ideas are strong in us we err by identifying ourselves with this mind, which seems to be the enjoyer of the things of this world. This propensity for selfish enjoyment deadens the pure function of the soul.

But the soul knows that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the one Supreme Absolute Truth, and that Śrī Nārāyaṇa is the embodiment of His majesty. By His display of sweetening beauty the transcendent designation, form, qualities, and sportive activities of Śrī Kṛṣṇa excel Śrī Nārāyaṇa's majesty. In Kṛṣṇa the fullest majesty is mellowed by the most delicious sweetness, *mādhurya,* which predominates. When we do not know all this and forget our true selves, we cannot understand the activities of a Vaiṣṇava and the transcendental truth underlying such activities, and so give ourselves up to worldly enmity and friendship, taking things transitory and illusory to be eternal and real.

Secondly, Kṛṣṇa is completely all-cognizant. Material objects are not conscious of their existence. God is ever existent. In error we consider ourselves Brahman. It is only then that such useless arguments for the effacement of all supersensual diversity or variety in the Absolute Truth take hold of us. Then the function of the spirit is clogged and our minds race after worldly enjoyment. The materialized mind thinks that sensual pleasure is obtained at Kṛṣṇa's feet. But at Kṛṣṇa's feet everything is spiritual, not objects for gratifying our senses. When truth is obscured in us who are carried away by egotistic tendencies, we take things

material to be of the spirit.

Kṛṣṇa is bliss. In Him dwells perfect joy; He is the embodiment of it. Sensory knowledge or joy is not perfect; therein all our longings are not realized. Under the spell of sense perceptions we imagine that there may be unalloyed happiness in ego worship or in the *kaivalya* state of Patañjali. Seeking after joy is the function of the soul. When the desire for joy awakens in our minds we commit a blunder by running after worldly objects and enjoyment. Only when we receive a spiritual sight of Kṛṣṇa do we recognize that His service must necessarily be the sole aim in life. As long as we hanker after our own pleasures, we try to enjoy the world through the senses and are given to hollow argumentation. Yet this world is not made for our enjoyment. When spiritual bliss appears in us like the incessant flow of oil, then we shall be truly tied to the feet of Kṛṣṇa.

Numerical variety such as one, two, or three exists only in worldly diversity. This diversity acquires a certain inexpressible sameness in the spiritual world. There we can appreciate that Kṛṣṇa alone is the eternal Absolute Truth. When the very existence of truth and sentiency in our own selves is understood as relative solely to Him, then only are we established in our real, normal state.

At present many false meanings have been imported into the word *bhakti.* Regard for one's parents, loyalty to man, obedience to the teacher, et cetera, pass as *bhakti*. But the linguistic root *bhaj* means "to serve." If we do not clearly judge as to what must be the medium of that service then it is sure to be misapplied. As *Caitanya-candrāmṛta* sings:

> *kālaḥ kalir balina indriya-vairi-vargāḥ*
> *śrī-bhakti-mārga iha kaṇṭaka-koṭi-ruddhaḥ*
> *hā hā kva yāmi vikalaḥ kim ahaṁ karomi*
> *caitanya-candra yadi nādya kṛpāṁ karoṣi*
>
> We live in the Kali-yuga, an age of strife. The self-luminous path of pure devotion is completely covered by millions of thorns in the form of foolish argumentation and wordy wrangling. In these circumstances, without the mercy of Caitanya-candra it is absolutely impossible to acquire knowledge of pure devotion.*

Śrī Caitanya-candra is Kṛṣṇa Himself. He is the Godhead. We cannot know God by the exertions of our senses. As the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* states:

> *nāyam ātmā pravacanena labhyo*
> *na medhayā na bahunā śrutena*
> *yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas*
> *tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanuṁ svām*
>
> The Supreme Lord is not perceivable by expert explanations, vast intelligence, or even much hearing. He is obtained only by one whom He Himself chooses. To such a person

He manifests His own form.[2]

Godhead is eternal. We cannot attain Him unless we realize that He is bliss Himself. One confined in a hundred ways within his psychic range cannot know what God is, and so acknowledges things other than God as objects of worship. Unable to understand either the true subject and object of enjoyment, or the nature of enjoyment itself, he imagines that the world was created to afford him every kind of pleasure. This materialized mind strives only after selfish enjoyment. By this fleshly form we cannot serve Kṛṣṇa; it is possible only in spirit. The atomic theory knows nothing of that service.

In the variety of His manifestations, the Absolute Truth Himself is to be determined from Nārāyaṇa. In Kṛṣṇa exists Nārāyaṇa, His majestic form. Baladeva is the manifestation of His self; He is the all-pervading Paramātmā. When the function of supreme knowledge is revealed to the soul, we come to know that Kṛṣṇa is the Absolute Truth and perfect bliss. Reverence does not stand in His way. Intimate service cannot be rendered if one is actuated by reverence. Kṛṣṇa is the eternal object of the devotee's wholehearted service, and is to be served with the ever-existent senses of the soul. We cannot serve Him through imagination or sentiment. Supersensuous knowledge of our relationship with Him is essential.

There is nobody whom I can call my own except one solely devoted to Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa alone is the single object of my service. This fidelity is the unique glory of the Vaiṣṇava. That is the highest necessity of life. Material fame full of the idea of selfish enjoyment is never desirable.

Time is running short. The evening *ārati* is drawing nigh. I must no longer encroach upon your time. Should it be Kṛṣṇa's wish, I shall again try to serve you. A thousand prostrations at the feet of Kṛṣṇa's devotees.

Fourteen

A Lecture at Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha

12 July 1936

We *jīvas* are really poor, no doubt. We are poor *jīvas,* but not "poor Nārāyaṇas." To identify Nārāyaṇa, the permanent possessor of all wealth, with a poor *jīva* is an absurdity. Our poverty should be diminished, and to that end wealth should be accumulated. Wealth of what kind? It is wealth of Kṛṣṇa-*prema,* causeless love for the Absolute Truth, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. And for this we should pray to Him in the same way that a Vaiṣṇava *mahājana* prayed:

> *prema-dhana vinā vyartha daridra jīvana*
> *'dāsa' kari' vetana more deha prema-dhana*
>
> Life without love is useless and poor, they say,
>
> Appoint me in Thy service, O Lord, with love as my pay. (Cc 3.20.37)

Our prayer should be of this nature. As soon as we feel necessity for Kṛṣṇa-*prema* we naturally begin to dislike everything but Kṛṣṇa. In absence of this, other tendencies and considerations take firm hold of our mind, exhorting us to be great workers, forgetful of the main objective of the *Pañcarātra.*

Now what course should we adopt regarding our propaganda work in England? Mahāprabhu enjoins us to proclaim His name throughout the length and breadth of this world, from small hamlets to big cities. At present, gross worldly names are everywhere in vogue. Henceforth let the transcendental name be proclaimed all over the world.

We do not belittle the importance of the *pāñcarātrika* process, of having representatives in theistic institutions or establishing temples with deities, yet we are of the opinion that the duty of the better or higher class is propaganda work. Mahāprabhu's *mano-'bhīṣṭa* is that Vaikuṇṭha-*nāma* be proclaimed everywhere, and to that end many pamphlets need be printed. The rich are the so-called big men of the world and are running after fame, females, and prestige. They will not listen to our words even if we cry hoarse in their ears, so why waste time on them? Therefore we say that the line of our propaganda work should be to produce sufficient number of pamphlets, even at the cost of possibly suspending temple construction. This will show them the insignificance of discoveries of truths or discussions that have found expression in their philosophies or applied sciences, in contrast to the enormity and magnitude of the subject matter of our discussions.

A self-conceited braggart can never successfully carry on propaganda work. How could it be possible for him? For the Absolute Truth never manifests to a vainglorious person who

considers himself the only preacher of truth. Such a man can do no good for the world. Among such persons some will be fond of prohibited food as available at Kalighat, some will be malicious patriots engrossed in considerations of their own advantages as opposed to others' interests, while others will be in the clutches of self-enjoying propensities or its opposite—tendencies toward renunciation with a view to have self-emolument or salvation—and the rest will make a pretense of *bhakti*.* But none of them will have the least idea of the Supreme Absolute Truth divested of the slenderest trace of insincerity and maliciousness.

Oh, how deplorable it is that the propaganda of the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu,* the glorious unique devotional teachings of India, is stopped here in the very land of its origin! And it is no less regrettable to see people suffering under the mistaken idea that mere ringing of bells in places of worship, mere formal observance of prescribed rites, touring holy places, ostentatiously reciting holy works like the *Bhāgavatam* for the sole purpose of earning a livelihood, or playing the role of preceptors merely by heredity right are sure signs of *bhakti* —such persons being quite ignorant of the true significance of proper worship, the true object of pilgrimage, the actual duties and exemplary ways of a preceptor, the true culture of theistic works like the *Bhāgavatam,* and the difference between real and false *bhakti*.

It is painful to see people frittering away valuable time in no better work than mischievous ill-conceived criticism of others' conduct. They excel only in giving advice to others. No doubt their damned mind is responsible for that. So every morning on rising from bed they should make their wicked mind hear the following immortal song of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda:

bhaja re bhaja re āmāra mana ati manda
(bhaja) braja-vane rādhā-kṛṣṇa-caraṇāravinda

(bhaja) gaura-gadādharādvaita guru-nityānanda
(smara) śrīnivāsa haridāsa murāri mukunda

(smara) rūpa-sanātana-jīva-raghunātha-dvandva
(smara) rāghava-gopāla-bhaṭṭa-svarūpa-rāmānanda

(smara) goṣṭhi-saha karṇapūra sena śivānanda
(smara) rūpānuga sādhu-jana bhajana-ānanda

In this song the mind is first of all asked to hold *bhajana* of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in Their joyful activity in the sacred bowers of Vraja.* In comparative view the degrees of excellence of the five *rasas* from *mādhurya* to *śānta,* the state in which active service is wanting, are gradually lowering. A servitor in *śānta-rasa* is neither actively engaged in nor against *bhajana;* he will neither counter nor actively conduct it. Now *bhajana,* or *bhakti,* may be of different kinds. There is *micchā-bhakti* (false *bhakti*), as opposed to *śuddha-bhakti* (unalloyed *bhakti*), the former resorted to by adherents of *karma,* who are followers of *smṛti.* Ṭhākura Narottama dāsa warns us against such false *bhakti:*

karmī-jñānī micchā-bhakta na habe tāte anurakta
śuddha-bhajanete kara mana

Be not attached to *karmīs, jñānīs,* and devotees false,
Pure unalloyed *bhajana* do always endorse.[1]

The cult of the self-styled social reformers or society-makers of the past or present age is quite different from the ideas and principles of *bhaktas.* At present, followers of the former are active in various movements relating to personal advantage and self-enjoyment. Those agitators who, leaving aside all considerations of *bhakti,* are busy in movements only for temporal advantages are harming themselves. Their failure to serve Kṛṣṇa, the emporium, or rather the emblem, of all endless immeasurable nectar of love, joy, and pleasure, bespeaks simply of their ignorance of the real state of affairs. Such apathy toward service to Kṛṣṇa gradually turns one into an upholder of *nirviśeṣa-vāda.* What could be more deplorable for mankind? So to counteract the aforesaid tendencies in us, each morning we should sing advice to our wicked mind to hold *bhajana,* but which is impossible if we are unmindful of the *tṛṇād api sunīcena* dictum.

The only object of our *bhajana* is the holy feet of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa roaming about freely in the forest of Vraja. What should be our line of conduct in performing *bhajana*? Mahāprabhu's advice to Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī in this connection was:

grāmya-kathā nā śunibe, grāmya-vārtā nā kahibe
bhāla nā khāibe āra bhāla nā paribe

amānī mānada haña kṛṣṇa-nāma sadā la'be vraje rādhā-kṛṣṇa-sevā mānase karibe

Have no worldly talk, nor pay heed to it;
Wear not good clothes, nor rich food do eat;
Humbly take always *kṛṣṇa-nāma* on your tongue;
Within the mind serve Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa all day long. (Cc 3.6.236–37)

In these verses the first two recommendations are in the negative, the remaining in the affirmative. By "Vraja-*sevā,*" Mahāprabhu meant service to Kṛṣṇa by one who has a transcendental body and whose self-realization is complete. People ignorant of this generally turn into mental speculators and cannot rightly understand the teachings of the Gauḍīya Maṭha.

This wicked mind, which is never to be trusted, should be broom-sticked every morning with such caveats as "Be not anxious to find fault with others or to proclaim thyself as a true, sincere, bona fide *bhakta,* which certainly you are not." In this connection the advice of a Vaiṣṇava *mahājana* is:

karmī-jñānī micchā-bhakta na habe tāte anurakta
śuddha-bhajanete kara mana
vraja-janera yei mata tāhe habe anugata

ei se parama tattva-dhana

Be not attached to *karmīs, jñānīs,* and *bhaktas* false.
Pure unalloyed *bhajana* do always endorse.
Follow principles that Vraja folk adopt—
Valued truths to be kept aloft.

The mind is always working erroneously in looking upon this thing or that as either good or bad. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* states:

'dvaite' bhadrābhadra-jñāna, saba—'manodharma'
'ei bhāla, ei manda'—ei saba 'bhrama'

In the material world, conceptions of good and bad are all mental speculations. Therefore to say "This is good" or "That is bad" is a mistake. (Cc 3.4.176)

People are usually overly busy in mental speculation. They should relieve themselves of this and try to ascertain their actual benefit. There is an adage, *para-carcākera gati nāhi kona kāle:* "A man habituated to criticize others' conduct will never prosper."[2] Let others do whatever they like; I have no concern with them. I should find fault with my own damned mind and think like the Vaiṣṇava *mahājana* who sang:

āmāra jīvana, sadā pāpe rata,
nāhiko puṇyera leśa

para-sukhe duḥkhī, sadā mithya-bhāṣī,
para-duḥkha sukha-karo

Ever acting viciously,
Not a trace of virtue in me.
Sorry at others' pleasures, always speaking falsities,
And merry at others' sorrows and adversities. (*Śaraṇāgati*)

We should always remember this song and engage our mind ceaselessly in Hari-*bhajana.* We should not run about attacking others with a dissuading policy. Such conduct behooves only deceitful persons, not preachers.

The ways of *karmīs* and *jñānīs* will direct us into immense difficulties by side-tracking our attention to contemplate shadowy transient phenomena instead of the only cause or true origin, the *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha,* the ever-existing joyful conscious entity Kṛṣṇa, of whom everything visible in this world is a mere silhouette. The gross archaeologist is busy ascertaining the material ingredients of idols that may be of stone, wood or other material, some persons are iconographers or iconoclasts, and others are busy discerning the amount of filth or impurities accumulated in a particular soil. Yet they never care to discover or measure the

impurities of their own mind. They never attempt to weed out undesirable elements of their consciousness, though such an endeavor is of paramount importance for their own self-interest.

Now whose *bhajana* are we to perform? Whom are we to worship? Usually we want to worship mammon with an aim to satisfy our own personal greed. Or sometimes we desire to secure the exalted position of president of America. But we never consider the necessity of worshiping the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa skipping merrily in the forest of Vraja, without which there is no other way to secure permanent benefit.

There are some who want to worship Kṛṣṇa not of Vṛndāvana but of Dvārakā, where He is served majestically by thousands of queens, while others are willing to respectfully serve only with the help of their upper limbs Lord Vaikuṇṭhanātha, who is possessed of all wealth and magnificence. Yet Śrī Caitanya-deva asks, "Should any service be done not with the help of all the limbs, from head to foot, including the inferior, lower limbs?" One will find no difficulty to properly answer this if he introspects, "If these lower limbs have no use at all or do not exist in the transcendental world, of which this gross world is a mere shadow, then why do they exist?" In fact, to use these limbs in serving the Absolute Lord is their proper adjustment. Want of this understanding will lead us to woeful ways of *karma* and *jñāna.*

Tad-vanam upāsitavyam: "The forest of Vraja alone is to be served and worshiped." [3]* To this end, we should always associate with the followers and devotees of Śrī Caitanya. Association with those who take the historic or speculative side of Kṛṣṇa will spoil everything. Now what does Śrī Caitanya say? He says that His name will be proclaimed everywhere, all over the world, from small hamlets to big cities. Mahāprabhu desires that all people of the world know Kṛṣṇa-*kathā,* details or discussions about Kṛṣṇa as prevailing in Vṛndāvana. Notwithstanding their proficiency in various fields of activity, they should feel the necessity for Rādhā-Govinda-*bhajana.*

The twelve *vanas* included within Vṛndāvana are places of Kṛṣṇa-*bhajana* in twelve separate *rasas,* of which five are primary and seven secondary. Vana-bihārī Kṛṣṇa, playful Kṛṣṇa who scampers in the forest of Vraja and is the very form, emblem, or avatar of all *rasa,* is alone to be served and worshiped, not any other thing like earth, water, or mud. Yet in so doing we should beware of the ways of mental speculators who for the sake of enjoying the world pose as Kṛṣṇa, for such persons are liable to quarrel among themselves for their own share of enjoyment and ultimately fall into the lowest depth of degradation. To avoid this calamity, Kṛṣṇa should be worshiped as Vana-bihārī, Kṛṣṇa in the land of His own free and joyful movement.

Now to turn to the third line of the previous song: *(bhaja) gaura-gadādharādvaita guru-nityānanda.* Śrī Gadādhara has taught us the proper way to serve Kṛṣṇa by his own example of serving Mahāprabhu. Rāya Rāmānanda and Dāmodara Svarūpa set the same example. Mahāprabhu Himself demonstrated the true function of a servitor. Though He is the real master to be served, He played the role of a servitor to show us how a servitor should perform his duty. Again, Śrī Gadādhara Prabhu is also a servitor of Mahāprabhu. The same Absolute Lord

is Kṛṣṇa in His enjoying activity and Śrī Gaurasundara in His serving capacity, and Śrī Gadādhara Prabhu is His transcendental consort. A parallel example is if a man scratches his body with his own hand while another person simultaneously scratches him; in this analogy Śrī Gadādhara Prabhu is the additional party. To be more explicit, Mahāprabhu serves His own self, Kṛṣṇa, while Śrī Gadādhara serves Mahāprabhu.

Now to turn to Advaita Prabhu. He acted as an *ācārya* or preceptor, and so Śrīla Kavirāja Gosvāmī says:

> *advaitaṁ hariṇādvaitād ācāryaṁ bhakti-śaṁsanāt*
> *bhaktāvatāram īśaṁ tam advaitācāryam āśraye*
>
> Because He is nondifferent from the Supreme Lord Hari, He is called Advaita, and because He propagates the cult of devotion He is called Ācārya. He is the Lord and the avatar of the Lord's devotee. Therefore I take shelter of Him. (Cc 1.1.13)

So-called *ācāryas* of the present day are not removers of their disciples' afflictions and miseries, but removers of their properties. Yet what sort of *ācārya* was Advaita Prabhu? From His own version in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* we find that He declares Himself a servant of a servant of Śrī Caitanya.[4] Servitude is the predominating feature of *bhakti*, and the *ācārya* Advaita Prabhu sings glory to it by declaring Himself a servant of Mahāprabhu. This serving tendency is predominant in the other four *rasas* also. Advaita Prabhu's special characteristic is His identifying His own revered self as servitor to Mahāprabhu despite being in a venerable position like a father. Such humble serving attitude is never found in the character of today's hypothetical *ācāryas* whose only object in life is to live happily by acting as guru.

The next advice in the aforesaid song is to serve Guru Nityānanda. We are to follow Their ideal only. We should not offer ourselves to be guided by these ignorant debauched fools fond of eating goats' flesh. Such persons can never act as gurus, themselves having fallen to the lowest depth of degradation.

The next advice is *(smara) śrīnivāsa haridāsa murāri mukunda,* "Remember Śrīnivāsa, Haridāsa, Murāri, and Mukunda," who were Nityānanda Prabhu's assistants and Mahāprabhu's associates in His earthly activities in Navadvīpa. They were asked by Mahāprabhu to go from door to door and bless everyone with *harināma:*

> *prati ghare ghare giyā koro ei bhikṣā*
> *bolo 'kṛṣṇa', bhaja kṛṣṇa, koro kṛṣṇa-śikṣā*
>
> *ihā bai ār nā bolibā, bolāibā*
> *dina-avasāne āsi' āmāre kahibā*
>
> Go from door to door and beg their favor
> To say "Kṛṣṇa," serve Kṛṣṇa, and learn His air.

Say not and make not others say anything more.
And at sunset, with news come back to my door. (Cb 2.13.9–10)

Then we find the instruction: *(smara) rūpa-sanātana-jīva-raghunātha-dvandva.* Here we are told to remember the *gosvāmīs* Rūpa, Sanātana, Jīva, Raghunātha dāsa, and Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa. We are to follow them. *Bhajana* is impossible without following Rūpa Gosvāmī in particular.

At this point Raja K.C. Deb Rāya of Bansberia entered, offering due obeisances to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's holy lotus feet. In course of discussion he remarked that it was God's mercy to have inspired him to visit the Maṭha on the very day of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's arrival, to which Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī responded:

[Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura:] Yes, Bhagavān is always lending us a helping hand, so we should stretch out our hands to catch hold. We should wait for His favor, and when it comes we should avail of it. Then it will be alright.

[Raja Rāya:] But your blessings, the holy dust of your lotus feet, are above all. Today is a glorious day. Today Bhagavān has kindly supplied food for my soul.

[Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura:] Yes, the soul no doubt requires nourishment. The function of the limited soul toward the Universal Soul is called *bhakti,* and that is the only thing needed. Yet unfortunately, people do not understand it. In *bhakti* alone all will meet; nowhere else is union possible. Everything should be used in Bhagavān's service. Only such use is the proper adjustment of things. All will be well if our acquired knowledge is used in His service, making coincidence of circumstances possible, in absence of which there will be only chaos.

[Raja Rāya:] The news about you in the newspaper at once made you appear in my mind.

[Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī:] Yes, such association of ideas takes place when one is serving *śrī-vigraha.* Without this, one is likely to be overtaken by *nirviśeṣa* confabulation of the Absolute Truth as without form, figure, attributes, or activities. We should have full association with the Absolute Truth. But unfortunately, at present we are detached from that, with the result that we are bringing miseries and troubles upon ourselves by seeking finite things with hands outstretched to grasp only limited objects, all of which are far from being the undivided whole, the Absolute Truth. Such phenomenon will not cease until we take shelter under the holy feet of Bhagavān, who is undivided and infinite. *Śrī-vigraha* is certainly the direct manifestation of the Absolute Truth, Bhagavān.

[Raja Rāya:] But schemas regarding the true identity of Bhagavān differ in various sects and communities, some persons opining that He is unmanifest, while others think He is manifest.

[Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī:] Yes, but those are merely different perspectives of mental speculation. To accept one idea now and reject it the next moment is useless and to be avoided.

We should relieve ourselves of this and try to directly approach Bhagavān, *akhila-rasāmṛta-mūrti* (the very form of the nectar of consummate *rasa*).* Yet we should not forget that He is transcendental and thus not measurable or perceptible to our gross senses. Efforts to measure Him will give rise to varied skeptic views. Therefore *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* and *Brahma-saṁhitā* state:

ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ
sevonmukhe hi jihvādau svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ

The Name, who is identical with Kṛṣṇa, is not perceptible to gross senses, but manifests Himself, i.e., is articulated, of His own accord on the tongue of those eager to serve Him. (Brs 1.2.234)

premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena
santaḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣu vilokayanti
yaṁ śyāmasundaram acintya-guṇa-svarūpaṁ
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi

I worship that original Lord Śyāmasundara, Kṛṣṇa, who is possessed of inconceivable form and attributes, perceptible only to transcendental eyes smeared and invigorated with the salve of loving service known as *bhakti.* (*Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.38)

Fifteen

Circumambulation of the Divine Realm of Vraja

The following is an extract from an article of the same title in the Harmonist *29.7.193–98 (January 1932).*

The whole attention of the pilgrim has to be given not to the landscape nor to any shrine or figures. It is least of all necessary for him to attend to the activities of himself. It is imperative to turn his attention to the minutest doings and sayings of the sadhu under whose direction he has chosen to perform the devotional journey. If he goes on indulging his own fancies and viewing with his own eyes the entities on the spiritual plane he may, indeed, succeed in deluding himself but he will assuredly miss the only legitimate object of his pilgrimage. If he attends and lives up to the instructions of his spiritual guide and does not allow himself to be directed by any other consideration, he will automatically find himself on the plane of *arcana* in course of the performance of his spiritual journey, by the unsolicited and causeless grace of the *sad*-guru (bona fide spiritual guide).

The very first principle, therefore, which all intending circumambulators should accept in their heart of hearts, is to attend fully to the instructions of the bona fide guide and prefer following them to every other occupation. If he tries to do so he will find that the bona fide guide will put him to activities which may be neither such as are to his liking nor what he had previously arranged for. The *sad*-guru will upset all his pre-arranged plans. The pilgrim is not expected to be allowed to guide himself in any way. It is the nature of the conditioned soul to be tempted to assume his own guidance however much he may profess to be guided by another.

It is not the journey but the method of its performance that really matters. Any journey that is performed under the lead of the sadhu is a spiritual function. No journey that is not so performed can have any spiritual value. The circumambulation of Śrī Vraja-*maṇḍala* has the further advantage of spiritual associations which are of great help to the novice on the path of spiritual endeavor. The novice is in a position on such occasions to be put in mind by the sadhu that he is never to attend to the scene at all, because what he will see if he does so is not the thing which he should see, but something else, the sight of which will be obstructive of the real function for which he is out on his pilgrimage. The sadhu himself will see everything very carefully and minutely, but he will never encourage the novice to any function of the kind. If the novice submits to be so thwarted at almost every step and is prepared to do whatever the sadhu tells him to do with loyal faith, he will have gained the real object of his pilgrimage.

Sixteen

Circumambulation of Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma

The following is an extract from an article of the same title in the Harmonist *29.8.246–53 (February 1932).*

The pilgrim who is anxious to obtain the sight of Godhead is under the absolute necessity of seeking the aid of the divine realm. The sight of the divine realm admits us automatically also to the presence of the divinity, who abides only there. But the divine realm tests our sincerity as seekers of the service of Godhead before she condescends to aid our endeavour. If she finds that we want to dominate and not to serve the Truth, she presents her unapproachable face to our view. She appears as dumb as the sphinx to our hypocritical entreaties for her aid. This is the plight of the empirical pedant on the threshold of the divine realm. But the sadhu is always at our elbow with his counsel of genuine submission to the plenary power of Godhead in recognition of her divine nature. The sadhu speaks to us in concrete and intelligible language. But the sadhu speaks with real knowledge of the requirements of the position. There is thus imperative necessity of making the pilgrimage under the guidance of the real sadhu.

But the words of the sadhu also may appear to be irrational to one who is inclined to set up his experience of the world to be judge of the propriety of the sadhu's counsel. Mundane experience can give no positive help in the quest of the spiritual. It is not necessary to turn to it for such help. The words of the sadhu can give every help that one requires for the spiritual purpose, provided only that one is not really willing to have anything mundane.

The spiritual realm cannot be seen by the mortal eye, nor touched by the hand of flesh. Neither is it the closed ear that can hear the true voice of the sadhu. The ear of the soul is to be opened to the spiritual sound. In other words one is to listen to the words of the sadhu with the conviction that the words themselves are identical with the object which they signify, that if the words are only received by the fully receptive rational impulse the whole indivisible substantive reality will stand self-revealed. If the result is otherwise, it can only be due to the deliberate withholding of one's full attention. It is in one's power to correct this error of method when it is pointed out by the sadhu. In proportion as the receptive attitude of hearing is perfected, the true import of the words of the sadhu manifests itself to the soul of the hearer. It is necessary to offer this form of service by way of the preliminary on the threshold of the realm of the divinity, by all those who really want to enter there.

The pilgrim is required to give up his preference for pseudo-knowledge if he is to be benefited by his pilgrimage of the divine realm under the guidance of the sadhu who has a natural and exclusive attachment for the real truth. The guidance of the sadhu is necessary for enabling him to lend his full attention to his words by discarding all explicit or latent partiality for untruth. The function of the cognitive faculty is to be relieved from the consequences of its willful and

perpetual attraction *(sic)* toward untruth. Guidance for such an end is not any curtailment of one's freedom of rational choice. The rational faculty is only then true itself when it submits to be guided by a competent person in the quest of the Truth, who is located beyond its reach.* It is prepared to submit for its instinctive and causeless love for the truth. It is enabled to attain its fully expanded natural state by such submission. Neither the end nor the method indicated above proposes any form of mechanical subordination, to an external agency, which is being always enforced without any protest on the part of the conditioned soul by his material environment. Unless we are prepared to adopt the only rational course that is open to us, the attainment of the knowledge of the Absolute Truth in the form of willing submission for receiving Him from His agents, we really abdicate our rational function by preferring to follow the irrational alternative. We are of course free to go astray. We are also free to maintain that such irrational course is rational. But such sophistry will not enable us to avoid the logical consequences of such a procedure in the shape of losing sight of the Truth altogether.

True, the description of Śrī Navadvīpa-*dhāma* in the literary works penned by the devotees who speak of the Absolute Truth is bound to appear to the uninitiated as being apparently opposed to the evidence of one's senses. This is the standing grievance of the empiric historians and antiquarians in regard to the statements of the devotees. But the devotees always take good care to inform their readers that they are not describing anything that is limited by space and time. Empiric historians and antiquarians cannot be expected to understand on their own terms the nature of spiritual entities. Neither is that their function or purpose. The erratic excursions of empiric historians and antiquarians into the domains of the spirit should be avoidable by the exercise of the ordinary honest common sense that is happily to be found also in this mundane world.

It is not proposed that the empiric historian and antiquarian should be debarred from approaching the subject of the Absolute. It is the duty of all persons, including the atheists, to seek the Absolute and to seek nothing but the Absolute. But the empiric method which is employed by the historians and antiquarians engaged in the so-called investigations of the phenomena of this world by the resources of their defective limited senses cannot enable one to understand at all the subject matter of the revealed scriptures. It is, of course, open to the empiric historians and antiquarians to apply their own method to the investigation of a spiritual subject for deducing a purely mundane conclusion against the principle of rationality. This has actually been done by more than one famous writer. But such an attempt constitutes only one of the numerous departments of changeable human knowledge which have nothing to do with the spiritual.

One who undertakes the pilgrimage of Śrī Navadvīpa-*dhāma* with the conviction and in pursuance of the method of the empiric historian and antiquarian, will certainly enrich the range of the worldly experience which he values. But he will miss the spiritual end, which is declared by the scriptures to be attainable by the performance of the journey under the guidance of the sadhus. We invite all persons to join the devotional function with the attitude that is necessary for ensuring the success of the spiritual quest, which alone matters.

It will not be irrelevant to consider at this point the nature of the objection that has actually been taken by certain persons to the practice of asking pilgrims to serve Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa at Śrīdhāma Māyāpur. These objectors probably think that Śrī Gaura-kuṇḍa and Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa are merely tanks that have been made by recent excavation and cannot, therefore, have really anything to do with either Śrī Rādhikā or Śrī Gaurasundara, who appeared on this earth long ago.

But those who make the pilgrimage to Śrīdham Māyāpur never suppose that either Gaura-kuṇḍa or Rādhā-kuṇḍa can be any pool of water of this or any other period, or that bathing in Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa is identical with a bath in some ancient tank of the British district of Muttra. Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa is always invisible to mortal eyes; nor can any mortal ever bathe in the same. But Śrī Gaurasundara appeared in the form of His power in the home of Śrī Candraśekhara Ācārya. Śrī Caitanya Maṭha occupies the site of the residence of Śrī Candraśekhara Ācārya. Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa is certainly to be found in the home of Śrī Candraśekhara by one who seeks for a bath in the same. Śrī Gaura-kuṇḍa is to be eternally found only in the home of Śrī Jagannātha Miśra. Those who have no faith in Śrī Gaurasundara are not likely to understand the sayings and doings of His devotees, nor ever attain the sight of the eternal transcendental realm of the Divinity.

Seventeen

Gandhiji's Ten Questions

In December 1932, Gandhi called for a Śāstrī Pariṣad to assemble for two days at Yerwada Jail in Pune, where he was immured. The objective was to ascertain, by debating ten questions given by him, whether untouchability is enjoined by *śāstra* and there are scriptural restrictions on untouchables' entering a temple. The pro-untouchability *śāstrīs* put forth a condition: if their position were upheld, Gandhi must stop his movement to eradicate untouchability. Gandhi agreed. But his attempt to organize that debate brought him yet further frustration and disappointment. He concluded that the *śāstrīs* were "full of prejudices and hatreds," and continued his anti-untouchability campaign. On 27 December the ten questions were published in *The Hindustan Times,* a Delhi paper that he had been involved with since its inception. The questions, and also the Gauḍīya Maṭha's unsolicited response to them, appeared in the *Harmonist* on 7 January 1933.[1] [*]

(1)

Q. Define untouchability according to the *śāstras.*

A. In various texts of the spiritual *smṛtis,* which contain the regulations that apply to the external conduct of persons desirous of attaining the life of service of Godhead, all intimate association with persons who are openly hostile to the scriptures, or who neglect to obey the injunctions of the *śāstras* commanding all persons to lead the pure (*sāttvika*) life prescribed for the *brāhmaṇas* and their dependents, is categorically forbidden. This prohibition does not include association that is strictly necessary for secular purposes in conformity with the spiritual end. Nor does it imply that any person is to be looked down upon or disrespected. Intimate association is defined as consisting of: giving and taking presents, eating and feeding, hearing and telling secrets. Gandhiji has consciously or unconsciously borrowed the idea of nonviolent noncooperation from these very texts of the *śāstras,* but with this all-important difference that the *śāstras* reserve its application solely to the spiritual purpose.[†] There are also *smṛtis* for the regulation of purely secular affairs, which also contain taboos and restrictions that are the outcome of racial, cultural, or historical causes. But the spiritual *smṛtis* subordinate all such interests to the spiritual purpose.

The spiritual *smṛtis* also prescribe sundry restrictions in deity worship. The deity must not be worshiped by a non-*brāhmaṇa,* i.e., by anyone who has no real knowledge of Godhead. Such knowledge is available to all persons who are prepared to submit under the conditional direction of the bona fide spiritual guide (*sad*-guru) to the necessary training enjoined by the spiritual *smṛtis* upon the novice. For the same reason, those who have no real faith in the spiritual nature of the worshipers or of the deity are forbidden to have *darśana.* The worshiper may permit anyone to have *darśana* who has any real faith or, at any rate, who is not

deliberately opposed to the deity, the authority of the scriptures, and of the *brāhmaṇas.* This has its bearing on the issue of temple entry by untouchables and touchables alike, although not in the sense that the question nowadays presents itself to the mercenary priests, on the one hand, and the demos, empiricists, and social and political reformers, on the other. But the reform of the present abnormal state of affairs in the temples is not likely to be expedited by the practical abolition of the śāstric institution, by the acceptance of any proposal in the form in which it is likely to emanate from the leaders of the demos. The saner course would be to allow sufficient time for the people to ponder over the real meaning of the mode of worship of Godhead by the method of *arcana* revealed by the *śāstras,* by trying to enlist for the cause all the resources of dispassionate judgment of the best minds. The *Harmonist* has been trying to place the issue before the whole world through the medium of the English language in a rationalistic form, within the narrow limits that the method is at all applicable to the Absolute.

(2)

Q. Can the definition of the untouchables given in the *śāstras* be applied to the so-called untouchables of the present day?

A. The so-called untouchables of the present day are groups of people who lie on the fringe of the orthodox Hindu society, as the result of cultural and historical causes. It is a matter for the consideration of the nation whether it is time to admit them on a footing of social equality, on the ground that the causes of keeping aloof from them have ceased to exist. It is a mistake to confound the regulations of the secular *smṛtis* for religious sanction. The so-called Hindu religion that is current at the present day is a purely secular affair with a plausible spiritual background improvised by the unscrupulous ingenuity of the propounders of the main philosophical systems of this country, which were primarily intended for bringing the secular arrangement under the sanction of the śāstric regulations. But the gulf between secular and spiritual is never bridged over by overlooking or explaining away its existence, as has been attempted by the empiric philosophers in this country and elsewhere. The point of view of the Indian philosophers is so far admissible that no secular arrangement should be acceptable to the race that is opposed to its spiritual requirements. The theistic interpreters of the Vedānta from Śrī Rāmānuja onward have provided the real philosophical background of the ritualistic worship enjoined by the spiritual *śāstras.* The career and teaching of Lord Caitanya complete the arch of transcendental philosophy that spans the otherwise impassable gulf separating this world from the realm of the Absolute.

(3)

Q. What are the restrictions imposed by the *śāstras* on the untouchables?

A. The nature of the restrictions which are imposed by the *śāstras* on one's intercourse with the opponents of the *śāstras* may be described as nonviolent spiritual non-cooperation in every affair. All intimate mixing with such people for any purpose whatever must be avoided on principle. But this is to be done in such a way as not to hurt the worldly susceptibilities of any

person or group. All worldly honor is to be paid where it is due by the standard of conduct established by general usage and legislation, or is approved by the political guardians of secular society, unless it is found to be actually opposed to practices enjoined by the *śāstras*. In case there is actual śāstric ground for noncompliance, the method of strictly nonviolent noncooperation should be followed by those who desire to obey the spirit of the *śāstras*.

It may not be superfluous to add that spiritual living is impossible unless one is prepared to conduct oneself as the inferior of all other entities. Those alone who are exclusive servants of the Absolute Truth are really in a position to pay full honor to all entities. Non-cooperation with the vagaries of the mind and body is due to the most profound respect for and faith in the superiority of every entity to oneself. The mind and body are the external casings and the cause of all disruptive differences. It is their nature to lead the soul away from the path of service to that of unnatural domination. It is necessary to steer clear of the dangers of imperialism, on the one hand, as well as of neutrality or equality, on the other, the last term denoting approximately the modern democratic ideal. The real principle to be adopted is one of unconditional reverence for all entities, by the realization and exclusive practice of the whole-time service of the Absolute Truth. All entities are properly and fully served by the exclusive service of the Absolute. Any secular institution that is opposed to the realization of this true end must be non-cooperated with in the spirit of perfect loyalty to the eternal interests of all entities. This genuine attitude of unreserved service of all entities is implied in the whole-time spiritual service of the Absolute in the form of *arcana*. There can be no "untouchables" in this method.

(4)

Q. Can an individual be free from untouchability in his own lifetime?

A. Everyone is free to serve the Absolute. The body and mind counsel the soul, who is inclined to be disloyal, to try to be master in his own right. The Absolute is the only master, and all souls are His eternal servants. The servants of one's master are also one's masters, inasmuch as they represent and carry out the wishes of the master. It is possible for every person to attain to the eligibility of the transcendental service of the Absolute by candid and unreserved submissive listening to the words of the bona fide teacher of the truth. Insincerity of disposition can alone prevent a person from recognizing the bona fide agent of the Absolute, who is the only proper teacher of the truth.

(5)

Q. What are the injunctions of the *śāstras* regarding the behavior of the touchables toward the untouchables?

A. The injunctions of the spiritual *smṛtis* regarding proper conduct toward the opponents of the *śāstras* have been codified in *Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* by Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, by command of Lord Śrī Caitanya. But they cannot be properly understood or practiced except by submitting to be enlightened regarding the nature of one's own self, by a course of spiritual

pupilage under the bona fide teacher of the Absolute. The ordinary restrictions to be observed toward atheists are in regard to the six kinds of intimate relationship, viz., giving and taking presents, eating with and feeding another person, and hearing and telling secrets to one another. These, together with the specific restrictions that relate to performance of the ritualistic worship of the *arcā* (icon), are observed by the Vaiṣṇavas in their behavior toward all declared atheists.

(6)

Q. Under what circumstances will the *śāstras* permit temple entry by untouchables?

A. Entry into the temple of Viṣṇu is allowable only to the worshipers of Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu is not a name concocted by the imagination of men. The transcendental name of Viṣṇu is identical with Himself. Viṣṇu is the only Godhead, the Absolute Person. The worshipers of the name, form, quality, activity, and servitors of Viṣṇu are the only worshipers of Godhead. The spontaneous service of Viṣṇu is eternally open to all souls by the grace of the Absolute. Those who do not wish to worship Viṣṇu are automatically expelled from the transcendental plane of His worship and find their congenial occupations on this mundane plane. They are able to practice these occupations by means of their physical bodies and minds, which are given to them for this purpose by the deluding potency of Viṣṇu. The worldly occupations consist of the endeavor for supplying the wants of the body and mind by the method of open and concealed hostility to the similar bodies and minds of other entities. It is this preoccupation with the malicious activities of the mundane plane that prevents the conditioned soul from entertaining any effective desire for attaining to the knowledge of the real state of things.

The temple of Viṣṇu is no entity of the mundane plane and is inaccessible to the conditioned soul, whether touchable or untouchable. The *arcā* of Viṣṇu, the temple of Viṣṇu, the worshiper of Viṣṇu, the worship of Viṣṇu, are all transcendental entities. Viṣṇu alone can admit the soul to the presence of these entities. The method by which the service of Viṣṇu is attainable by conditioned souls is made known to the people of this world by the transcendental agents of Viṣṇu, who are the only real teachers of the eternal function of all souls as revealed by the spiritual scriptures. Those who are disposed to listen to the words of the bona fide teachers of the Absolute with faith and submission may be led thereby to submit to be enlightened by actually undergoing the necessary course of spiritual pupilage under the unconditional direction of the bona fide spiritual guide (*sad*-guru). Only those persons who are imparted *dīkṣā,* i.e., spiritual enlightenment by the bona fide spiritual guide, become thereby eligible under his continuing direction to enter into the temple of Viṣṇu for the purpose of worship. His worship is open to all persons on the above conditions. The scriptures forbid the separate worship of the other gods, who are servants of Viṣṇu, as being derogatory to the dignity of the worship of Viṣṇu, the sole object of all worship. The other gods should be honored as servants of Viṣṇu but must not be worshiped as Godhead.

(7)

Q. What are the *śāstras*?

A. The *śāstras* are of various kinds. The spiritual *śāstras* are the only revealed scriptures. They are: *Ṛg, Yajur, Sāma,* and *Atharva Vedas,* the *Mahābhārata,* the original *Rāmāyaṇa,* the *Pañcarātra,* and all works that follow them. All other books are not only not *śāstras,* but constitute the positive wrong track. The *śāstra* is so called because He cannot be challenged, being the revealed word of Godhead. He can be understood only by the method of obeying the real meaning of the injunctions to be learnt from the bona fide teacher, by the method that is laid down in the *śāstra.* The empiric study and teaching of the spiritual *śāstras* by those who suppose them to be on a par with books written by empiricists are strictly forbidden by the *śāstras.*

(8)

Q. How is the authoritativeness of the *śāstras* to be proved?

A. The authoritativeness of the *śāstras* cannot be proved by the empiric method in which the consensus of the testimony of the senses is assumed to establish the truth of a proposition regarding any mundane occurrence. The Absolute is located beyond the scope of the human senses, and so the testimony of the senses, on which the empiricists rely, is not available for finding the Absolute. The Absolute reveals Himself to the senses of the soul by counteracting the opposition of the superimposed preventing apparatus of the physical senses. The transcendental sound appearing on the lips of His devotee has power of making Himself heard by the ear of the soul. Those persons who are privileged to hear the transcendental sound alone possess the knowledge of the reality which is the only true knowledge. These persons are able to convey the truth to conditioned souls by the process of oral communication. The *śāstras*, which are symbolized records of the transcendental sound, are not intelligible till the contents are heard in the form of articulated sound from the lips of self-realized souls. This is the one process of the descent of the Absolute to this mundane plane. This process is part of the Vedic revelation. There is no other method for approaching the Absolute. This negative testimony to the authoritative character of the scriptural records is in keeping with the requirements of empiric judgment. To this is to be added the positive testimony of a long series of self-realized souls who have attained spiritual enlightenment by following the scriptural method. The more one devotes his unbiased attention to the arguments and recorded experience of this large number of pure souls, the balance of probability is discovered to lie toward convinced faith in the authoritative character of the scriptures and their being identical with the Word, who is God.

It is only by submissive inquiry for the purpose of offering one's unconditional and exclusive service to the Absolute, and to nothing else, that the mercy of the Absolute requires to be solicited. Empiric arrogance is akin to the ridiculous, immoral, ungrateful, irrational attitude of the grain of sand on the seashore aspiring to carry in its pores the great ocean, whose tiny constituent it is. It is lack of humility before the Absolute that is responsible for our being saddled with the paraphernalia of the conditioned state for the elaborate display of our self-elected folly. The *śāstras* are identical with the master, and reserve the right of being not exposed to the limited mentality of man if He is approached by the challenging empiric mood.

Godhead is autocrat and His authority is above all challenge. His own word is His sole testimony. Spiritual enlightenment is a matter of grace, not of right. To realize that this must be so is the only proof of the possession of real sincerity of disposition. But such disposition toward the Absolute is also the gift of the causeless mercy of the Absolute Himself.

(9)

Q. How are the differences arising over the definitions or interpretations of the *śāstras* to be decided?

A. There are no disruptive differences on the spiritual plane, where the Absolute is eternally self-manifest to the uneclipsed cognition of the infinity of His servitors. Those interpretations that deviate from the line of vision of the Absolute produce discord and multiply differences only among those who are wanting in real sincerity of the unconditional serving disposition. The only way in which the doubts and difficulties of a conditioned soul may be removed is patient and loyal solicitation of the causeless mercy of the Absolute for removing one's duplicity and irrational arrogance. The word of the teacher of the Absolute Truth is truer than the earth and the heavens, and has to be received as such if his true meaning is to be realized. This is the teaching of all the revealed scriptures. Worldly knowledge is not a help, but is often a positive hindrance, in the quest of the Absolute. Neither is the Absolute to be found by discarding the right use of one's cognitive faculty. No referendum by any number of unenlightened souls can help a person or community to obtain the sight of Godhead.

(10)

Q. What are your conclusions?

A. The Absolute cannot be known by any methods of aspiring endeavor that are familiar to philosophers and scientists who meddle with physical nature. The only method is to wait for the agent of the Absolute to take the initiative, and to pray to be able to recognize him when he actually does appear on this mundane plane. The agent of the Absolute can alone remove our ignorance of the Truth, who is eternally revealed to this world by the spiritual *śāstras* in the form of the transcendental word. The agent of the Absolute will announce himself to whomsoever the Absolute is pleased causelessly to manifest Himself. Those who do not obtain His mercy are the only unfortunate persons. But those who are prepared to hope and wait for the pleasure of the Absolute are well advised and will one day obtain His causeless mercy as promised by the *śāstras*. External appearances are always deceptive, and the agent of the Absolute is likely to appear in the form that is least likely to appeal to the judgment of conditioned souls. It is necessary to keep the mind fully open to be enabled to recognize the agent of the Absolute under whatever external form he may choose to manifest his appearance to our erring vision. Till one has been actually favored by the mercy of the Absolute, one must abstain from setting up as a preacher of the truth.

EIGHTEEN

Pūtanā

The concluding portion of an article by this name, from the Harmonist *29.7.203–9 (January 1932)*

Śrī Kṛṣṇa manifests His eternal birth, the pure cognitive essence of the serving soul, who is located above all mundane limitations. King Kaṁsa is the typical aggressive empiricist, ever on the lookout for the appearance of the Truth for the purpose of suppressing Him before He has time to develop. This is no exaggeration of the real connotation of the consistent empiric position. The materialist has a natural repugnance for the transcendent. He is disposed to think that faith in the incomprehensible is the parent of dogmatism and hypocrisy in the guise of religion. He is also equally under the delusion that there is no real dividing line between the material and the spiritual. He is strengthened in his delusion by the interpretation of scriptures by persons who are like-minded with himself. This includes all the lexicographic interpreters. The lexicographical interpretation is upheld by Kaṁsa as the real scientific explanation of the scriptures, and is perfectly in keeping with his dread of, and aversion for, the transcendental. These lexicographical interpreters are employed by Kaṁsa in putting down the first suspected appearance of any genuine faith in the transcendental.

King Kaṁsa knows very well that if the faith in the transcendental is once allowed to grow it is sure to upset all his empiric prospects. There is historical ground for such misgivings. Accordingly, if the empiric domination is to be preserved intact, it would be necessary not to lose a moment to put down the transcendental heresy the instant it threatens to make its appearance in earnest. King Kaṁsa, acting on this traditional fear, is never slow to take the scientific precaution of deputing empiric teachers of the scriptures—backed by the resources of dictionary and grammar and all empiric subtleties—to put down, by the show of specious arguments based on hypothetical principles, the true interpretation of the eternal religion revealed by the scriptures. Kaṁsa is strongly persuaded that faith in the transcendental can be effectively put down by empiricism if prompt and decisive measures are adopted at the very outset. He attributes the failure of atheism in the past to the neglect of the adoption of such measures before the theistic fallacy has had time to spread among the fanatical masses.

But Kaṁsa is found to count without his host. When Kṛṣṇa is born He is found to be able to upset all sinister designs against those who are apprised by Himself of His advent. The apparently causeless faith displayed by persons irrespective of age, sex, and condition may confound all rabid empiricists who are on principle averse to the Absolute Truth, whose appearance is utterly incompatible with the domination of empiricism. But no adverse efforts of the empiricists, whose rule seems till then to be perfectly well established over the minds of the deluded souls of this world, can dissuade any person from exclusively following the Truth when He actually manifests His birth in the pure cognitive essence of the soul.

Pūtanā is the slayer of all infants. The baby, when he or she comes out of the mother's womb, falls at once into the hands of the pseudo-teachers of religion. These teachers are successful in forestalling the attempts of the good preceptor, whose help is never sought by the atheists of this world at the baptisms of their babies. This is ensured by the arrangements of all established churches of the world. They have been successful only in supplying watchful Pūtanās for effecting the spiritual destruction of persons, from the moment of their birth, with the cooperation of their worldly parents. No human contrivance can prevent these Pūtanās from obtaining possession of the pulpits. This is due to the general prevalence of atheistic disposition in the people of this world. The church that has the best chance of survival in this damned world is that of atheism under the convenient guise of theism. The churches have always proved the staunchest upholders of the grossest form of worldliness, from which even the worst of non-ecclesiastical criminals are found to recoil.

It is not from any deliberate opposition to the ordained clergy that these observations are made. The original purpose of the established churches of the world may not always be objectionable, but no stable religious arrangement for instructing the masses has yet been successful. The Supreme Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, in pursuance of the teachings of the scriptures, enjoins all absence of conventionalism for the teachers of the eternal religion. It does not follow that the mechanical adoption of the unconventional life by any person will make him a fit teacher of religion. Regulation is necessary for controlling the inherent worldliness of conditioned souls. But no mechanical regulation has any value, even for such a purpose. The bona fide teacher of religion is neither any product of, nor the favorer of, any mechanical system. In his hands no system has likewise the chance of degenerating into a lifeless arrangement. The mere pursuit of fixed doctrines and fixed liturgies cannot hold a person to the true spirit of doctrine or liturgy.

The idea of an organized church in an intelligible form indeed marks the close of the living spiritual movement. The great ecclesiastical establishments are the dikes and the dams to retain the current that cannot be held by any such contrivances. They indeed indicate a desire on the part of the masses to exploit a spiritual movement for their own purpose. They also unmistakably indicate the end of the absolute and unconventional guidance of the bona fide spiritual teacher. The people of this world understand preventive systems; they have no idea at all of the unprevented positive eternal life. Neither can there be any earthy contrivance for the permanent preservation of the life eternal on this mundane plane on the popular scale.

Those are, therefore, greatly mistaken who are disposed to look forward to the amelioration of the worldly state, in any worldly sense, from the worldly success of any really spiritual movement. It is these worldly expectants who become the patrons of the mischievous race of the pseudo-teachers of religion, the Pūtanās, whose congenial function is to stifle the theistic disposition at the very moment of its suspected appearance. But the real theistic disposition can never be stifled by the efforts of those Pūtanās. The Pūtanās have power only over the atheist. It is a thankless, but salutary, task which they perform for the benefit of their unwilling victims.

But as soon as theistic disposition proper makes its appearance in the pure cognitive essence of the awakened soul, the Pūtanās are decisively silenced at the very earliest stage of their encounter with new-born Kṛṣṇa. The would-be slayer is herself slain. This is the reward of the negative services that the Pūtanās unwittingly render to the cause of theism by strangling all hypocritical demonstrations against their own hypocrisy. But Pūtanā does not at all like to receive her reward in a form which involves the total destruction of her wrong personality. King Kaṁsa also does not like to lose the services of the most trusted of his agents. The effective silencing of the whole race of pseudo-teachers of religion is the first clear indication of the appearance of the Absolute on the mundane plane. The bona fide teacher of the Absolute heralds the advent of Kṛṣṇa by his uncompromising campaign against the pseudo-teachers of religion.

Nineteen

Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda

Published in the December 1931 Harmonist, *this essay addresses misconceptions of so-called followers of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and of others addicted to the empiric method of scriptural study.*

We avail of the opportunity offered by the anniversary celebrations of the advent of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, to reflect on the right method of obtaining those benefits that have been made accessible to humanity by the grace of this great devotee of Kṛṣṇa.

Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda has been specifically kind to those unfortunate persons who are engrossed in mental speculation of all kinds. This is the prevalent malady of the present age. The other *ācāryas* who appeared before Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda did not address their discourses so directly to the empiric thinkers. They had been more merciful to those who are naturally disposed to listen to discourses on the Absolute without being dissuaded by the specious arguments of avowed opponents of Godhead.

Śrīla Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda has taken the trouble of meeting the perverse arguments of mental speculationists by the superior transcendental logic of the absolute truth. It is thus possible for the average modern readers to profit by the perusal of his writings. That day is not far distant when the priceless volumes penned by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda will be reverently translated, by the recipients of his grace, into all the languages of the world.

The writings of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda provide the golden bridge by which the mental speculationist can safely cross the raging waters of fruitless empiric controversies that trouble the peace of those who choose to trust in their guidance for finding the truth. As soon as the sympathetic reader is in a position to appreciate the sterling quality of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda's philosophy, the entire vista of the revealed literatures of the world will automatically open out to his reclaimed vision.

There have, however, already arisen serious misunderstandings regarding the proper interpretation of the life and teachings of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda. Those who suppose they understand the meaning of his message without securing the guiding grace of the *ācārya* are disposed to unduly favor the methods of empiric study of his writings. There are persons who have got by heart almost everything that he wrote without being able to catch the least particle of his meaning. Such study cannot benefit those who are not prepared to act up to the instructions lucidly conveyed by his words. There is no honest chance of missing the warnings of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda. Those, therefore, who are misled by the perusal of his writings, are led astray by their own obstinate perversity in sticking to the empiric course which they prefer to cherish against his explicit warnings. Let these unfortunate persons look more carefully into their own hearts for the cause of their misfortunes.

The personal service of the pure devotee is essential for understanding the spiritual meaning of the words of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda. The editor of this journal, originally started by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, has been trying to draw the attention of all followers of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda to this all-important point of his teachings. It is not necessary to try to place ourselves on a footing of equality with Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda. We are not likely to benefit by any mechanical imitation of any practices of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, on the opportunist principle that they may be convenient for us to adopt. The guru is not an erring mortal whose activities can be understood by the fallible reason of unreclaimed humanity. There is an eternally impassable line of demarcation between the savior and the saved. Those who are really saved can alone know this. Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda belongs to the category of the spiritual world-teachers who eternally occupy the superior position.

The present editor has all along felt it his paramount duty to try to clear up the meaning of the life and teachings of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, by the method of submissive listening to the transcendental sound from the lips of the pure devotee. The guru who realizes the transcendental meaning of all sounds is in a position to serve the Absolute, by the direction of the Absolute conveyed through every sound. The transcendental sound is Godhead, the mundane sound is non-Godhead. All sound has got these opposite aptitudes. All sound reveals its divine face to the devotee, and only presents its deluding aspect to the empiric pedant. The devotee talks apparently the same language as the deluded empiric pedant who had got by heart the vocabulary of the scriptures. But notwithstanding apparent identity of performance, the one has no access to the reality while the other is absolutely free from all delusion.

Those who repeat the teachings of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda from memory do not necessarily understand the meaning of the words they mechanically repeat. Those who can pass an empiric examination regarding the contents of his writings are not necessarily also self-realized souls. They may not at all know the real meaning of the words they have learnt by the method of empiric study. Take, for example, the name Kṛṣṇa. Every reader of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda's works must be aware that the Name manifests Himself on the lips of His serving devotees although He is inaccessible to our mundane senses. It is one thing to pass the examination by reproducing this true conclusion from the writings of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, and quite another matter to realize the nature of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa by the process conveyed by the words.

Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda did not want us to go to the clever mechanical reciter of the mundane sound for obtaining access to the transcendental name of Kṛṣṇa. Such a person may be fully equipped with all the written arguments in explanation of the nature of the divine name. But if we listen to all these arguments from the dead source the words will only increase our delusion. The very same words coming from the lips of the devotee will have the diametrically opposite effect. Our empiric judgment can never grasp the difference between the two performances. The devotee is always right. The nondevotee in the shape of the empiric pedant is always and necessarily wrong. In the one case, there is always present the substantive truth and nothing but the substantive truth. In the other case there is present the apparent or misleading hypothesis

and nothing but untruth. The wording may have the same external appearance in both cases. The identical verses of the scriptures may be recited by the devotee and the nondevotee, may be apparently misquoted by the devotee, but the corresponding values of the two processes remain always categorically different. The devotee is right even when he apparently misquotes, and the nondevotee is wrong even when he quotes correctly the very words, chapter, and verse of the scriptures. It is not empiric wisdom that is the object of quest of the devotee. Those who read the scriptures for gathering empiric wisdom will be pursuing the wild goose chase. There are not a few dupes of their empiric scriptural erudition. These dupes have their admiring underdupes. But the mutual admiration society of dupes does not escape, by the mere weight of their number, the misfortunes due to the deliberate pursuit of the wrong course, in accordance with the suggestions of our lower selves.

What are the scriptures? They are nothing but the record by the pure devotees of the divine message appearing on the lips of the pure devotees. The message conveyed by the devotees is the same in all ages. The words of the devotees are ever identical with the scriptures. Any meaning of the scriptures that belittles the function of the devotee who is the original communicant of the divine message, contradicts its own claim to be heard. Those who think that the Sanskrit language in its lexicographical sense is the language of the divinity, are as deluded as those who hold that the divine message is communicable through any other spoken dialects. All languages simultaneously express and hide the Absolute. The mundane face of all languages hides the truth. The transcendental face of all sound expresses nothing but the Absolute. The pure devotee is the speaker of the transcendental language. The transcendental Sound makes His appearance on the lips of His pure devotee. This is the direct, unambiguous appearance of the Divinity. On the lips of nondevotees the Absolute always appears in His deluding aspect. To the pure devotee the Absolute reveals Himself under all circumstances. To the conditioned soul, if he is disposed to listen in a truly submissive spirit, the language of the pure devotee can alone impart the knowledge of the Absolute. The conditioned soul mistakes the deluding for the real aspect when he chooses to lend his ear to the nondevotee. This is the reason why the conditioned soul is warned to avoid all association with nondevotees.

Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda is acknowledged by all his sincere followers as possessing the above powers of the pure devotee of Godhead. His words have to be received from the lips of a pure devotee. If his words are listened from the lips of a nondevotee, they will certainly deceive. If his works are studied in the light of one's own worldly experience, their meaning will refuse to disclose itself to such readers. His works belong to the class of the eternal revealed literature of the world, and must be approached for their right understanding through their exposition by the pure devotee. If no help from the pure devotee is sought, the works of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda will be grossly misunderstood by their readers. The attentive reader of those works will find that he is always directed to throw himself upon the mercy of the pure devotee, if he is not to remain unwarrantably self-satisfied by the deluding results of his wrong method of study.

The writings of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda are valuable because they demolish all empiric objections against accepting the only method of approaching the Absolute in the right way.

They cannot and were never intended to give access to the Absolute without help from the pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa. They direct the sincere inquirer of the truth, as all the revealed scriptures do, to the pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa, to learn about Him by submitting to listen with an open mind to the transcendental sound appearing on his lips.

Before we open any of the books penned by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda we should do well to reflect a little on the attitude, with which as the indispensable prerequisite, to approach its study. It is by neglecting to remember this fundamental principle that the empiric pedants find themselves so hopelessly puzzled in their vain endeavor to reconcile the statements of the different texts of the scriptures. The same difficulty is already in process of overtaking many of the so-called followers of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda and for the same reason.

The person to whom the *ācārya* is pleased to transmit his power is alone in a position to convey the divine message. This constitutes the underlying principle of the line of succession of the spiritual teachers. The *ācārya* thus authorized has no other duty than that of delivering intact the message received from all his predecessors. There is no difference between the pronouncements of one *ācārya* and another. All of them are perfect mediums for the appearance of the Divinity in the form of the transcendental Name, who is identical with His form, quality, activity, and paraphernalia.

The Divinity is Absolute Knowledge. Absolute Knowledge has the character of indivisible unity. One particle of the Absolute Knowledge is capable of revealing all the potency of the Divinity. Those who want to understand the contents of the volumes penned by the piecemeal acquisitive method applicable to deluding knowledge available to the mind on the mundane plane are bound to be self-deceived. Those who are sincere seekers of the truth are alone eligible to find Him, in and through the proper method of His quest.

In order to be put on the track of the Absolute, listening to the words of the pure devotee is absolutely necessary. The spoken word of the Absolute is the Absolute. It is only the Absolute who can give Himself away to the constituents of His power. The Absolute appears to the listening ear of the conditioned soul in the form of the name on the lips of the sadhu. This is the key to the whole position. The words of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda direct the empiric pedant to discard his wrong method and inclination on the threshold of the real quest of the Absolute. If the pedant still chooses to carry his errors into the realm of the Absolute Truth, he only marches by a deceptive bypath into the regions of darker ignorance by his arrogant study of the scriptures. The method offered by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda is identical with the object of the quest. The method is not really grasped except by the grace of the pure devotee. The arguments, indeed, are these. But they can only corroborate, but can never be a substitute for, the word from the living source of the truth who is no other than the pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa, the concrete personal absolute.

Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda's greatest gift to the world consists in this; that he has brought about the appearance of those pure devotees who are, at present, carrying on the movement of unalloyed devotion to the feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa by their own wholetime spiritual service of the Divinity. The

purity of the soul is only analogously describable by the resources of the mundane language. The highest ideal of empiric morality is no better than the grossest wickedness to the transcendental perfect purity of the bona fide devotee of the Absolute. The word *morality* itself is a mischievous misnomer when it is applied to any quality of the conditioned soul. The hypocritical contentment with a negative attitude is part and parcel of the principle of undiluted immorality.

Those who pretend to recognize the divine mission of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda without aspiring to the unconditional service of those pure souls who really follow the teachings of the Ṭhākura, by the method enjoined by the scriptures and explained by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda in a way that is so eminently suited to the requirements of the sophisticated mentality of the present age, only deceive themselves and their willing victims by their hypocritical professions and performances. These persons must not be confounded with the bona fide members of the flock.

Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda has predicted the consummation of religious unity of the world by the appearance of the only universal church, which bears the eternal designation of the Brahma *sampradāya.* He has given mankind the blessed assurance that all theistic churches will shortly merge in the one eternal spiritual community, by the grace of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. The spiritual community is not circumscribed by the conditions of time and space, race, and nationality. Mankind had been looking forward to this far-off divine event through the long ages. Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda has made the conception available in its practicable spiritual form to the open-minded empiricist who is prepared to undergo the process of enlightenment. The keystone of the arch has been laid which will afford the needed shelter to all awakened animation under its ample encircling arms. Those who would thoughtlessly allow their hollow pride of race, pseudo-knowledge, or pseudo-virtue to stand in the way of this long-hoped-for consummation, would have to thank only themselves for not being incorporated in the spiritual society of all pure souls.

These plain words need not be misrepresented by arrogant persons who are full of the vanity of empiric ignorance, as the pronouncements of aggressive sectarianism. The aggressive pronouncement of the concrete truth is the crying necessity of the moment, for silencing the aggressive propaganda of specific untruths that is being carried on all over the world by the preachers of empiric contrivances for the amelioration of the hard lot of conditioned souls. The empiric propaganda clothes itself in the language of negative abstraction for deluding those who are engrossed in the selfish pursuit of worldly enjoyment.

But there is a positive and concrete function of the pure soul, which should not be perversely confounded with any utilitarian form of worldly activity. Mankind stands in need of that positive spiritual function, of which the hypocritical impersonalists are in absolute ignorance. The positive function of the soul harmonizes the claims of extreme selfishness with those of extreme self-abnegation in the society of pure souls even in this mundane world. In its concrete realizable form the function is perfectly inaccessible to the empiric understanding. Its imperfect and misleading conception alone is available by the study of the scriptures to the conditioned

soul that is not helped by the causeless grace of the pure devotees of Godhead.

Twenty

The Perils of Bābājī Life

This excerpt from Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta *(sec. 5, pt. 2) warns against premature renunciation, as was then common in the* Gauḍīya sampradāya, *and helps to clarify the background of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's revolutionary and oft-misunderstood introducing of* sannyāsa.

There is a sect of *bābājīs* who call themselves *viraktas* (detached). They dress like *bābājīs* and think themselves renounced, but it is a mistake to think that simply accepting a name will produce *virakti* (detachment). One should not accept the dress of a *bābājī* if *virakti* has not appeared within oneself as a corollary of *bhāva*. *Bābājī* means to have developed *virakti* through *bhāva,* whereby all aspects of material life become distasteful. Those who find this world and family life unfavorable for cultivating devotion should restrict their needs, wear simple cloth, and partake only of *prasāda* obtained by begging. This lifestyle will gradually become natural for them. When it is determined by the guru that their character has actually transformed in accordance with scriptural standards, and they are deemed qualified, that is real attainment of *bābājī* status. The present custom of awarding *bābājī* status to unqualified people is extremely dangerous.

What to speak of developing *bhāva,* without being steady in *vaidhī bhakti* many people flightily or out of temporary renunciation adopt *bābājī-veśa* for the purpose of making a living. "Temporary renunciation" refers to distaste for the world that arises from disagreement between man and wife, other forms of suffering in family life, inability to get married, satiation with prostitutes, the influence of intoxicants, and so on. With this immature sense of renunciation people boldly approach a *bābājī* or *gosvāmī* and offer some donation in exchange for a *kaupīna* and cloth. But soon the "renunciation" wears off and the men or women, controlled by the senses, fall into illegitimate family life, or secretly satisfy their senses illicitly. They attain no spiritual advantage from this. The Vaiṣṇava community will not derive benefit until this type of *bābājī* life is completely eradicated. False renunciation is a great offense to devotional life.

Among persons who identify themselves as Vaiṣṇava renunciants, those who have actually attained detachment through *bhakti* are very rare. They should be given full respect. Unauthorized renunciants are divided into four classes: monkey renunciants, cheating renunciants, unsteady renunciants, and imitative renunciants. Monkey renunciants don the cloth of a renunciant, but not being renounced, they gallivant around with uncontrolled senses committing sinful acts. Cheating renunciants adopt *bābājī* dress to facilitate eating with Vaiṣṇavas during festivals or for receiving donations from householders to enjoy food, tobacco, or ganja, or to get their funeral rites performed by Vaiṣṇavas when they pass away. Unsteady renunciants accept *bābājī-veśa* due to momentary feelings of renunciation arising from suffering, poverty, sickness, failure of marriage, or quarrel. Their renunciation does not endure;

very quickly they become false renunciants. Imitative renunciants are those who, due to addiction to intoxicants, fail in married life and make a show of devotion while intoxicated, or learn how to act as a devotee by showing false symptoms, or try to imitate the stage of *bhāva* by material emotions. All these categories of so-called renunciants are low, sinful, and unbeneficial for the world.

Renunciation arising from *bhakti* is the beauty of devotional life. To first renounce and then search out *bhakti* is unnatural and in most cases disastrous. Renunciation or detachment is the special ornament of the person who has attained *bhāva*. It is not an *aṅga* of *bhakti,* but a symptom of *bhakti.*

Twenty-one

The Wise Old Monkey

A fable narrated by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and included in Upākhyāne Upadeśa

There once lived a king who had many sons. For their entertainment he had ordered an entire family of monkeys to be caught and domesticated. Those monkeys lived in the palace, and the princes would play with them and feed them tasty tidbits. The leader of these simians was a wise elderly monkey who was studied in the scriptures of Cāṇakya Paṇḍita and other sages, which he taught to his kinsmen.

Besides these monkeys, a flock of sheep was kept to pull a cart for the princes' amusement. Among these sheep, one especially ravenous ram always sought opportunities to sneak into the kitchen and guzzle whatever he could. Upon noticing the ram in their territory, the cooks would immediately strike him with the first object they could grab. This was a daily occurrence and sometimes happened a few times a day.

One time, after seeing the cooks beat the ram, the monkey leader became pensive. He deliberated, "Wherever cooks fight with a ram is a dangerous place for monkeys, for one day the following could happen: After the ram enters the kitchen, the cooks will find nothing to strike him with except a log from the oven. The ram's hair will catch fire, so he will scoot into the stable just opposite the kitchen and roll on the straw-covered floor to try to extinguish the fire. The straw will ignite and quickly incinerate the stable. Some horses will die; the rest will be severely burned. The king will call in his physicians, who will tell him that according to the great veterinary Śālihotra the best cure for horses' burns is monkey fat. This will be the ruin of my family, for the king will have us slaughtered for our fat. I think we should run for our lives without delaying a minute."

The wise monkey then called his relatives, apprised them of the precarious situation, and advised their return to the wilds, noting, "We may have to revert to a simple and austere life, but at least we will be safe." Unfortunately, his advice was scoffed at: "Senile fears! Because of this old ape's anile prejudices must we now leave the palace—where princes feed us fried, boiled, and steamed food and sweets, and we live in blissful peace—to again munch leaves and sleep on branches? No way!" However much their sapient leader tried to explain that Spartan living is better than certain death, the other monkeys only protested and jeered him.

Despairing, and unwilling to witness the extermination of his dynasty, he resolved to leave alone for the forest. Thereafter the rest of the monkeys continued living in the palace, enjoying the princes' affection and royal luxuries.

One day everything came to pass as the elder monkey had predicted. The greedy ram sneaked into the kitchen and was binging on everything in sight, when the cooks spotted him and,

enraged, looked for something heavy to smite him with. Finding only a half-burned brand from the oven, one cook grabbed it and beat the ram, whose long hairs then blazed up, causing him to bolt from the kitchen into the stable and roll in the straw, and thereupon the entire stable was soon consumed by a whirling, tempestuous fire. Half of the king's favorite steeds died in the conflagration, while the others managed to break their tethers and survive, suffering acute burns in the ordeal.

The king called for his veterinarians and asked how his horses could be healed. They respectfully submitted, "Mahārāja, Maharṣi Śālihotra has written that the best treatment for horses' burns is monkey fat. It relieves the animal's pain just as the rising sun rids darkness." "Wonderful!" the king exclaimed. "We have an entire family of monkeys in the palace. Take them and do the needful to cure my horses." The king's servants then took nets, swords, and spears and encircled the monkeys, not one of which escaped. When shortly thereafter the wise leader of the monkeys received news of his family's annihilation, he was plunged into grief.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī explained the moral of this story thus: Disciples who sincerely follow the instructions of their guru and shun bad association will be benefited. But those who consider that he has become senile and has nothing further to teach them, or that they now know as much as or more than he—such disciples will surely become casualties of *asat-saṅga* and be ruined. Observing this tendency in some of his *śiṣyas* and unable to bear witnessing their destruction, the *ācārya* departs from this world.

Twenty-two

Questions to a Prākṛta-sahajiyā Convention

A letter from and on behalf of the Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā to Sir Maṇīndra-candra Nandī Bāhādura, chairman of the Kashimbazar Sammilanī, dated 19 Caitra 1326 (1 April 1920)[1]

With great respect we make the following request:

We have received a description of your activities and the invitation letter sent by you. The questions written below were sent to the participants of the meeting and to the assembled Vaiṣṇavas. We will be grateful if you reply as soon as possible. These questions may also be discussed within the Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā.

1. What is the significance of placing two "Śrīs" before the word ***? Is it wrong to put the word "Śrī" before the word "Gauḍīya" and the word "Vaiṣṇava"?

2. Caitanyābda 434 is written in the Christian fashion.[*] Will this continue till the last day of Caitra 1326?[†] Or is it correct to start the year with Mahāprabhu's birth *tithi* and be written according to traditional calculations?

3. If your chairman Bāhādura is initiated as a Vaiṣṇava, then recognizing him as twice-born and as the guru of all *varṇas* it is scripturally acceptable that he function as chairman of a Vaiṣṇava assembly; otherwise, how can so-called gurus and descendants of Mahāprabhu's associates maintain their dignity under the chairmanship of a *śūdra*? Or perhaps one could say that his functioning as the head is in proportion to his devotion. Is the chairmanship of a Vaiṣṇava assembly settled according to the level of one's *bhakti,* or some other consideration? This is our query.[‡]

4. Your program states that there will be songs about *rasālasa* and *kuñja-bhaṅga; dāna-līlā, rūpa-abhisāra, vāsaka-sajjā, utkaṇṭhā, vipralabdhā, khaṇḍitā, rasodgāra, rūpānurāga, abhisāra* and *milana; nitya-rāga, alasa, jāgaraṇa,* and *svādhīna-bhartṛkā*.[*] May we have a list of the liberated souls who will recite and hear the above-mentioned compositions concerning the form, qualities, and pastimes of the Lord? If one hears these songs from conditioned souls attached to sense gratification or sings them among conditioned souls, the result will only be poison. How will Vaiṣṇava *brāhmaṇas* and their offspring protect their servants from this? Why did Ṭhākura Mahāśaya [Narottama dāsa] write *āpana bhajana kathā na kahiba yathā tathā:* "I shall not speak publicly about my own devotional practices"? Why did Jīva Gosvāmī write *prathamaṁ nāmnaḥ śravaṇam antaḥ-karaṇa-śuddhy-artham apekṣyam; śuddhe cāntaḥ-karaṇe rūpa-śravaṇena tad-udaya-yogyatā bhavati. samyag udite ca rūpe guṇānāṁ sphuraṇam:* "The first requirement is to hear the name of Kṛṣṇa to cleanse the heart. Once the heart has become purified, the form and qualities of Kṛṣṇa will appear"?[†] For whom did he write this? Many groups take shelter of *karma, jñāna,* and *yoga* in various degrees: *āula, bāula,*

kartābhajā, neḍā, daraveśa, sāṅi, sahajiyā, sakhī-bhekī, smārta, prabhu-santāna, ācārya-santāna, śūdra-vaiṣṇava-santāna, gṛhī-bāula, tyāgī-bāula, ativāḍī, cūḍādhārī, gaura-nāgarī, pāgaliyā, dādā o mā sampradāyī, nava-gaurāṅga-vādī, khola-bājānādāra, nācnewāla, kṛtrima-bhāvuka, daśāya paḍāra dala, raghunandana-smārta, three types of *dayānandī,* and *daridra-nārāyaṇa-vādī, vāmā-kṣepī, rādhā-śyāmī, balā-hāḍī, sāhebdhanī, kālācāṅdī, kiśorī-bhajā, kanāi-ghoṣī, caraṇa-dāsī, caraṇa-pālī, bābā-ṭhākurī, pratīpa-priyanāthiyā, śrīdhāma-vidveṣi, maubhoga-sārutiyā, siurīyā-bhāḍaṭiyā-vaktāra dala,* and others.[*] Will you call all of these groups Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas? Accepting that every *jīva* is a Vaiṣṇava, still we are not prepared to call anyone but a *rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇava a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava. What do you say about that?

5. Do you consider *kīrtana* of *nāmāparādha* and *nāmābhāsa* to be *nāma-kīrtana*? Do you have faith in the words *niraparādhe nāma laile pāya prema-dhana:* "By chanting without offense one receives the treasure of *prema*"?[2] Do you know that chanting the name with offense gives insignificant results? Do you know that making a distinction between the name and Kṛṣṇa Himself, thinking that chanting of the name is equivalent to pious activities, is an offense?

6. Can those who make a trade of or purchase the name, mantra, or the *Bhāgavatam,* impelled by greed for money, women, and fame, or who advocate spreading material lust in the name of worshiping the Lord, be called Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas? Would any Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* approve of remunerative lecturing and the hearing of such? Does any devotional *śāstra* approve of a pure devotee's contributing his name, body, and money to assist such persons?

7. If a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sammilanī* includes materialistic groups interested in physical pleasure and opposed to controlling the mind, or loses its objective through association with similarly oriented universities or examinations, can it benefit *aprākṛta* Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas?

Twenty-three

The Parasitical Caste Goswamis

The following excerpt (partially reproduced in Gauḍīya *4.858–59) is from M.T. Kennedy's* Chaitanya Movement, *pp. 153–60. Although Kennedy's conclusions regarding Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism were rejected by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his followers (see vol 2, p. 58), his social observations regarding caste Goswamis are largely consistent with and give detail to the analyses by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.*

The chief functions of the Goswami are those involved in the discharge of his duties as a guru. He presides over the initiation of the young and the introduction of new members into discipleship. The discharge of these duties calls for the regular visitation of disciples, usually once each year. Each Goswami has a certain number of disciples resident over a varying extent of country. These disciples represent the inheritance received from his predecessor, usually a father, and may be added to according to the energy and ambition of the Goswami. The annual visitation of disciples is something of an event, especially if the Goswami is a man of position and his disciples are well-to-do. He travels in state, with a *brāhmaṇa* cook and with servants and attendants. At the home of a disciple he is received with every mark of honor. The inmates bow at his feet, taking the dust therefrom and placing it on their heads in the traditional mode of veneration. He is waited upon with great deference and his feet are washed, the water being drunk by members of the family, unless their devotion has been infected somewhat by modern ideas. Feasting occupies no inconsiderable place in the program of the visit. The disciple provides articles of food in quality according to his means; and the guru's cook prepares the meals. The food is first offered to Kṛṣṇa and the remains left from the Goswami's meal are distributed through the family as *prasāda,* after the fashion of food received in a temple from before the image. If youths of the household are ready for initiation, the Goswami performs the ceremony and gives the mantra. This is given in secret, never to be revealed on pain of disaster. It is usually only a phrase embodying the name of Kṛṣṇa, although it is supposed to express some formula of the sect. This is really the only thing that constitutes discipleship to a guru, the receipt of the mantra on initiation. His functions as a religious teacher are usually fulfilled by the relation of stories from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* or the *Caritāmṛta,* to which the whole household listens, the younger female members catching what they can from behind screens if allowed out of their secluded apartments. Seldom is the guru sufficiently versed in the scriptures to talk with educated men, and as for systematic teaching or instruction of disciples, there is little or nothing of the kind given. The visit may last for several days or may be quite brief, depending very largely, one gathers, upon the opulence of the home. Upon departure the Goswami receives gifts according to the financial standing of the disciple, a money payment accompanied by ornaments and choice articles of clothing, such as dhotis and *cādars.* This annual gift of the disciple is called the *bārṣī.*

In addition to this yearly visit, the Goswami usually appears at weddings, and on other special

occasions, in the homes of his disciples. On the occasion of a wedding, it is the rule that the father should present the Goswami with cloth and money and beg his permission to give son or daughter, as it may be, in marriage. In the absence of the Goswami, this seeking of permission is made in advance and the gift sent, or it is collected by the Goswami's representative, or by himself at the annual visit. Similarly, on the occasion of special events in his own family he becomes the recipient of gifts from his disciples.

Most of the temples of the sect are owned by Goswamis, and in connection with such establishments *ākhḍās,* for the housing of the ascetic members of the sect, are often found. In a general way this provision for the worship and care of the sect may be set down as a function of the Goswamis.

In some cases they assume a judicial function over their disciples, much in the nature of a village *pañcāyata.*[*] In case of trouble, acting either independently or on complaint being lodged, the Goswami warns offenders and, if necessary, orders fines of from one to five rupees, according to the nature of the offense. The money thus secured is publicly spent.

Some organization is required for the administration of a Goswami's affairs, especially if the list of his disciples is long. In some parts of Bengal it appears that Goswamis divide their territory and have agents to care for their interests. A district is divided into sections, called *bhabuk mahal,* and to each *mahal* is assigned two representatives, whose business it is to collect fees from disciples and to propagate the faith. These men are known as *faujdars* and *chaḍidars.*[†] Of all fees collected they receive a fixed percentage. For initiation, marriage, and death ceremonies the usual fee due to the Goswami is one rupee, six annas. Of this amount the *faujdar* receives four annas and the *chaḍidar* two annas.

From the above it will be gathered that the chief relation of the Goswami to his disciples is a monetary one. They constitute his chief wealth. This is evident from the way in which a Goswami's disciples are divided by his sons, in case trouble arises among them at his death. The rich and the poor among the disciples are carefully apportioned among the sons, and they may then set up separate establishments. The son of a Goswami does not become the guru of his father's disciples, but the children of his father's disciples become his own; hence the care with which families are divided. The disciple has little to say to this shuffling, for he is enjoined by his religion to render absolute veneration to each generation of his guru's family. Many Goswamis live entirely on the income derived from the gifts and fees paid by their disciples. In some cases, as with the Khardaha Goswamis, that means a position of affluence.[*] The result is a largely parasitic class of men, making little return in the way of moral and spiritual leadership to justify their existence. A good many of the class own temples and property connected therewith, and are not entirely dependent on the gifts of disciples. Some Goswamis enjoy landed property conferred upon their forefathers by rajas or zamindars. Instances have not been unknown where a disreputable Goswami has been ejected from such property and his village by the zamindar.

While in theory the Goswamis of the sect may be *brahmacārīs* (celibates), actually they are

almost entirely *gṛhasthas* (householders), and not ascetics. Therefore we find them living their lives very much in accordance with the observances of the Hindu society. We shall be greatly mistaken if we expect to find exemplified among them any of the socially unorthodox practices which marked the beginnings of the movement. As a considerable majority of the Goswamis of the sect are *brāhmaṇas,* it is not surprising to find that caste rules are strictly adhered to. They marry only among themselves and according to strict Hindu usage. Thus the members of the two leading Goswami families, the Nityānanda and the Advaita lines, do not intermarry although both are *brāhmaṇa,* because Nityānanda was a Rāḍhī, and Advaita a Bārendra *brāhmaṇa*—a geographical barrier that has become as fixed as the law of the Medes and Persians to the *brāhmaṇas* of Bengal.

As a whole, the Goswamis of the sect are usually in good standing in the Hindu community. At the same time, it should be said that there has always been somewhat of a tendency to look askance at them as a class, because of the character of the lower Vaiṣṇava adherents, and because some of them are gurus of low-caste people.* Their desire to be considered orthodox is further evidenced by the fact that they all claim to be *smārta,* involving usually a Shankarite point of view hardly in keeping with Caitanya's *bhakti* teaching.

Brāhmaṇa Goswamis do not dine with non-*brāhmaṇas* of this order, nor eat food cooked by non-*brāhmaṇas,* even at the Mahotsava, the great feast of the sect, at which all caste differences are supposedly forgotten. We have seen how, in certain outstanding instances in the history of the sect, saintly men of lower caste have been honored as gurus by *brāhmaṇa* disciples. But today there are not many instances of non-*brāhmaṇa* Goswamis with *brāhmaṇa* disciples, only a few of the *vaidya* caste retaining such disciples. During the past dozen years there seems to have been a strong revival of brahminical feeling, and therefore *brāhmaṇa* disciples of non-*brāhmaṇa* Goswamis naturally find themselves in an awkward and difficult position. Most non-*brāhmaṇa* Goswamis have disciples from among their corresponding castes. Any move toward caste relaxation is met with determined hostility on the part of the *brāhmaṇa* Goswamis. We are forced to conclude that the spirit of the origin of the Caitanya movement has little influence over the great body of the spiritual preceptors of the sect today.

In point of scholarship, the Goswamis as a whole are uneducated men. In former times there was more incentive to scholarship, and the greatest honor was reserved for those who approximated to the great ideal set by the original scholar-saints of the sect. But such conditions no longer obtain. Everything is against such scholarly lives. Of the most influential body—the Nityānanda Goswamis of Khardaha—very few are educated even in Sanskrit, and fewer still have received a Western education. Some members of Goswami families go in for modern education, but such men seldom continue to live as gurus thereafter. Some Goswamis combine business with their guruship. Even though engaged in shopkeeping or whatnot, they continue their relation to disciples.

For spiritual guidance and any real moral and social leadership in all that makes for the progress and wellbeing of society, the Goswamis as a whole are not qualified. The principle by which

they function in Vaiṣṇava society is thoroughly vicious, the basis of their guruship being inheritance rather than qualification for leadership. No matter how worthless, ignorant, and good-for-nothing a Goswami's son may be, he becomes the object of the same reverence which his father received. This veneration rests upon the universally accepted teaching which makes the guru the direct representative of Kṛṣṇa. His wrath is more potent for evil than the displeasure of Hari himself. Definite and explicit worship of the guru is inculcated in the ritual works which guide the daily practice of the disciple. For the devout disciple the guru is the vehicle of deity.

Thus securely ensconced in the superstitious awe of the laity, the Goswami is not greatly concerned with fitness for leadership. His main interest is in the preservation of his vested interests—the disciples bequeathed to him—and in the realization of the financial assets represented by them. Questions of moral and social import, for the welfare of society, do not impinge upon the consciousness of the average Goswami. Untouched by modern education themselves, they look with disfavor on its spread among their disciples. Their interests are involved in the old order, in the continuance of an unenlightened custom-bound community. They do not care; they have no vision of what should be. Therefore they do not and cannot lead in any real sense. They constitute a parasitic growth that exists to feed upon the movement of which, by reason of the vitiating doctrine common to so much of popular Hinduism, they happen to be the spiritual potentates.

Even were there enlightened vision and moral energy, there exists no means by which progressive action could be taken by the Goswamis. There is no organization among them, no sense of coherence, no community of action. Beyond the rather vague allegiance of most of them to the Nityānanda house, which involves no coordination whatsoever, there is no tie binding them together. Even among the branches of the same house, there is no cohesion. Each family line goes its own way. Association for common ends, mutual interests, and united action is an idea that has never disturbed the even tenor of their ways.

Twenty-four

Selected Quotations

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the *viṣaya-vigraha,* is the sole enjoyer, and all others are to be enjoyed by Him.[1]

All our works must be dovetailed and adjusted with the gratification of Krsna's senses.[2]

In Vaiṣṇava judgment, whatever activity is not for Kṛṣṇa's service and pleasure is most contemptible, no matter how praiseworthy it may be according to worldly vision.[3]

Rūpānuga devotees do not place faith in their own abilities, but give all credit to the source of all power.[4]

If we desire to follow an auspicious course in life, then disregarding the theories of even countless people, we should hear the Vedic instructions.[5]

We are not doers of good or bad deeds, nor are we scholars or ignoramuses. Carrying the shoes of the pure devotees of Hari as our shelter and protectant, we are initiates into the mantra *kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ.*[6]

Inclination to *kīrtana* effects *śravaṇa* and the opportunity for *smaraṇa.* At that time there is the possibility of serving within Kṛṣṇa's *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā.* In all respects pray to Śrī Nāma for his mercy.[7]

Pray with your heart to Śrī Harināma Prabhu for the eligibility to serve him. Nāma Prabhu, who is Nāmī Prabhu, will shine in your heart.[8]

Service to Kṛṣṇa, service to Kṛṣṇa's devotees, and *śrī-nāma-kīrtana,* although different undertakings, are the same in essence. By *nāma-saṅkīrtana,* service to Kṛṣṇa and His devotees is performed. By Vaiṣṇava-*sevā,* Kṛṣṇa-*kīrtana* and Kṛṣṇa-*sevā* are performed. By Kṛṣṇa-*sevā, nāma-saṅkīrtana* and Vaiṣṇava-*sevā* are performed. By reciting *Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* Kṛṣṇa-*sevā* and *nāma-saṅkīrtana* are performed. By reciting *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in the association of devotees, the same results are achieved. By *arcana,* these three are also effected. And by *nāma-bhajana,* they are excellently performed.[9]

If *śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana* is not performed, then no other limb of *bhakti,* such as Mathurā-*vāsa* or *sādhu-saṅga,* can be fulfilled. But if only *śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana* is performed, then the results of Mathurā-*vāsa,* of *sādhu-saṅga,* of faithfully serving deities, and of hearing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* are all fulfilled. *Nāma-bhajana* completely fulfils the *jīva's* every need.[10]*

By loudly chanting a fixed quota of rounds, *anarthas* go away and lethargy is chased out. And indeed, inimical persons will no longer be able to mock.[11]

Simple-heartedness is synonymous with Vaiṣṇavism. Servants of a *paramahaṁsa* Vaiṣṇava should be simple-hearted, a quality that makes them topmost *brāhmaṇas*.[12]

We must crush, crush, and crush all mundane attachments and relativities.[13]

If our mission is anything other than reestablishing the *mano-'bhīṣṭa* of Lord Caitanya, then we shall remain busy in competitive quarrels with foolish persons.[14]

Preaching without proper conduct falls within the category of *karma*.[15]

May we be ever ready to sweep from our hearts, by the rough application of hundreds of pointed broomsticks, the wicked desire to be honored above other Vaiṣṇavas. Kṛṣṇa will be merciful to us and bless us with the gift of devotion to His divine feet on the very day that we are delivered from the evil desire of seeking advantages and honor from others.[16]

Internal devotees have no desire other than personal service to *rūpānugas*.[17]

More beneficial than directly serving the Lord is to serve devotees; the living entity is benefited more by associating with Vaiṣṇavas than by associating with the Lord. And more favorable for pure devotional service than the Lord's abode is the abode of a devotee, the abode of *gurudeva*.[18]

There is no higher conception in the theistic realm than service at the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā-Govinda.[19]

Those who equate demigods with Viṣṇu are unable to serve Bhagavān.[20]

The benign hand of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is a better judge than our silly selves. No matter what troubles we meet during our journey of life, we should ever remain in the service of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa.[21]

Whatever Bhagavān does is for our welfare. By forgetting this truth or by giving up faith therein, we fall into dangers.[22]

Those favored by God find their path beset with thorns.[23]

Darśana of Śrī Rūpa's lotus feet is attained in a heart characterized by *prema,* which is *sevonmukha,* non-duplicitous, and filled with humility. When covered by the materialistic outlook, we become *karmīs, jñānīs,* and *anyābhilāṣīs,* and Śrī Rūpa, knowing us to be averse to *sevā,* leaves us.[24]

There is no peace or happiness in worldly life, for various circumstances constantly create turmoil and annoyance.

This world, averse to the Lord, is full of pain and trials. While here, the qualities of tolerance,

humility, and praise for others will help us serve the Lord.[25]

Worldly gossip will go on, but be indifferent to it. Stick firmly to your cherished goals; then no deficiency or impediments will ever obstruct you.[26]

A devotee feels the presence of God everywhere, but one averse to the Lord denies His existence anywhere.

If a devotee always serves guru and Kṛṣṇa with great care, attachment, and love, he will definitely experience Kṛṣṇa's association.[27]

Becoming prominent or dominant in a worldly sense is simply another way of describing one's insignificance.[28]

After rising from sleep, take your shoes and beat your mind a hundred times. And before retiring at night, take a broomstick and beat your mind a hundred times. Then you can control your mind; otherwise it is very difficult.[29]

Kṛṣṇa-*prema-rasa* should be our desired end. We should be *rasikas* and *bhāvukas* and never become devoid of *rasa*.[30]*

Twenty-five

Selected Poems Glorifying Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā Homage

Offered in 1935 by Śrī Abhaya Caraṇāravinda dāsa and published in the Harmonist *of 4 March 1936*

Adore adore ye all
The happy day,
Blessed than heaven,
Sweeter than May,
When he appeared at Purī
The holy place,
My Lord and Master
His Divine Grace.

Oh! my Master
The evangelic angel,
Give us Thy light,
Light up Thy candle.
Struggle for existence
A human race.
The only hope
His Divine Grace.

Misled we are
All going astray.
Save us Lord
Our fervent pray.
Wonder Thy ways
To turn our face.
Adore Thy feet
Your Divine Grace.

Forgotten Krishna
We fallen souls,
Paying most heavy
The illusion's toll.
Darkness around
All untrace.
The only hope
His Divine Grace.

Message of service
Thou hast brought.

A healthful life
As Chaitanya wrought.
Unknown to all
It's full of brace.
That's your gift
Your Divine Grace.

Absolute is sentient
Thou hast proved,
Impersonal calamity
Thou hast moved.
This gives us a life
Anew and fresh.
Worship Thy feet
Your Divine Grace.

Had you not come
Who had told
The message of Krishna
Forceful and bold.
That's your right.
You have the mace.
Save me a fallen
Your Divine Grace.

The line of service
As drawn by you
Is pleasing and healthy
Like morning dew.
The oldest of all
But in new dress.
Miracle done
Your Divine Grace.

Śrīla Prabhupāda-vandanā

(A Prayer to Śrīla Prabhupāda)

Originally titled "Ṭhākurer Prati Nivedana," this Bengali song was written by Śrī Gopāla Govinda Mahānta, of Sylhet (then in Assam, now in Bangladesh), before Gauḍīya Maṭha preachers had ever gone there. He was unknown to Gauḍīya Maṭha devotees until this homage arrived by post during the annual Gauḍīya Maṭha festival of 1927. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī accepted the composition, and thereafter it was regularly sung throughout the Gauḍīya Maṭha institution.

(1)

jayare jayare jaya, paramahaṁsa mahāśaya,
śrī bhaktisiddhānta sarasvatī
gosvāmī ṭhākura jaya, parama karuṇāmaya,
dīna hīna agatira gati

Glory, glory, glory to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura, a great personage and devotee situated on the highest level of devotional service! He is most merciful and is the means of success for the fallen and hopeless.

(2)

nīlācale haiyā udaya
śrī gauḍa-maṇḍale āsi, prema bhakti parakāśi,
jīvera nāśilā bhava-bhaya

Arising in Nīlācala (Purī), he came to Śrī Gauḍa-*maṇḍala,* where he manifested loving devotional service to Kṛṣṇa and destroyed the living entities' fear of material existence.

(3)

tomāra mahimā gāi, hena sādhya mora nāi,
tabe pāri, yadi deha śakti
viśva-hite avirata, ācāra-pracāre rata
viśuddhā śrī rūpānuga-bhakti

Although I have no ability, I sing your glories. But I will be able to do so if you empower me. Always executing spiritual praxes for the benefit of the world, you preach pure devotional service in the line of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

(4)

śrīpāṭa kheturi-dhāma, ṭhākura śrī narottama,
tomāte tāṅhāra guṇa dekhi
śāstrera siddhānta-sāra, śuni lāge camatkāra,
kutārkika dite nāre phāṅki

I see in you the qualities of Śrī Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura of Kheturi-*dhāma*.* Hearing from you the crux of all scriptural conclusions, whereby you stop the deception of the mundane wranglers, I am simply astonished.

(5)

śuddha bhakti-mata yata, upadharma-kavalita,
heriyā lokera mane trāsa
hāni susiddhānta-bāna, upadharma khāna khāna
sajjanera bāḍā'le ullāsa

Devotees became anxious because all bona fide conceptions of pure devotional service were engulfed by superstitions. But by shooting the arrow of proper scriptural conclusions, you cut those superstitions to pieces and increased the devotees' joy.

(6)

smārta-mata-jaladhara, śuddha-bhakti ravikara,
ācchādila bhāviyā antare
śāstra-sindhu-manthanete, susiddhānta-jhañjhāvāte,
uḍāilā dig-digantare

Considering that the clouds of *smārta* opinions had covered the sunshine of pure devotional service, you churned the ocean of revealed scriptures. Thus from all directions arose strong winds of correct scriptural conclusions to dispel those clouds.

(7)

sthāne sthāne kata maṭha, sthāpiyācha niṣkapaṭa
prema-sevā śikhāite jīve
maṭhera vaiṣṇava-gaṇa, kare sadā vitaraṇa
hari-guṇa-kathāmṛta bhave

You established so many Maṭhas in so many places to teach to the *jīvas* guileless loving service to Kṛṣṇa. The Vaiṣṇava inhabitants of these Maṭhas constantly distribute to the world the nectarean descriptions of the qualities of Lord Śrī Hari.

(8)

śuddha-bhakti-mandākinī, vimala-pravāha āni,
śītala karilā tapta-prāṇa
deśe deśe niṣkiñcana, prerilā vaiṣṇava-gaṇa,
vistārite hari-guṇa-gāna

You bring the clear flow of the Gaṅgā of pure devotional service to cool the lives of those burning in material existence. You send renounced preachers to every country to distribute the praises of Hari's qualities.

(9)

pūrve yathā gaurahari, māyāvāda ccheda kari,
vaiṣṇava karilā kāśī-vāsī
vaiṣṇava-darśana sūkṣma, vicāre tumi he dakṣa,
temati toṣilā vārāṇasī

Like Lord Gaurahari, who previously smashed Māyāvāda and made the inhabitants of Vārāṇasī into Vaiṣṇavas, you too are expert in understanding and explaining the subtleties of Vaiṣṇava philosophy.

(10)

daiva-varṇāśrama-dharma, hari-bhakti yāra marma,
śāstra-yuktye karila niścaya
jñāna-yoga-karma-caya, mūlya tāra kichu naya,
bhaktira virodhī yadi haya

On the basis of scripture you established that devotional service is the essence of *daiva-varṇāśrama-dharma,* and that if one is against Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti,* his performance of fruitive activities, practice of mystic yoga, or cultivation of knowledge is all worthless.

(11)

śrī gauḍa-maṇḍala-bhūmi, bhakta-saṅge parikrami,
sukīrti sthāpilā mahāśaya
abhinna vraja-maṇḍala, gauḍa-bhūmi premojjvala,
pracāra haila viśvamaya

You established the glories of Gauḍa-*maṇḍala-bhūmi* by traversing it in the association of devotees and everywhere preaching that Gauḍa-*maṇḍala* is effulgent with *prema* and nondifferent from Vraja-*maṇḍala.*

(12)

kuliyāte pāṣaṇḍīrā, atyācāra kailayā' rā,
tā' sabāra doṣa kṣamā kari
jagate kaila ghoṣaṇā, "taror iva sahiṣṇunā,"
han "kīrtanīya sadā hari"

You forgave all the faults of those atheists of Kuliyā who behaved abominably toward you. Thus you announced to the world that the prerequisite for always glorifying Śrī Hari is the principle of being more tolerant than a tree.

(13)

śrī-viśva-vaiṣṇava-rāja, sabhā madhye pātrarāja,
upādhi-bhūṣaṇe vibhūṣita
viśvera maṅgala lāgi, haiyāccha sarva-tyāgī,
viśva-vāsī jana-hite rata

In the Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā you are decorated with the title of Pātrarāja (president). You renounced everything to bring auspiciousness to the world. Indeed you are ever attached to doing good for the people of the universe.

(14)

kariteccha upakāra, yāte para-upakāra,
labhe jīva śrī kṛṣṇa-sevāya
dūre yāya bhava-roga, khaṇḍe yāhe karma-bhoga,
hari-pāda-padma yāte pāya

You performed welfare activities so that the living entities could attain the highest benefit of service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whereby the disease of material life becomes far removed and enjoyment of fruitive activities is destroyed, enabling one to attain the lotus feet of Śrī Hari.

(15)

jīva mohani-drāgata, jāgā 'te vaikuṇṭha-dūta,
"gauḍīya" pāṭhāo ghare ghare
uṭhare uṭhare bhāi, āra ta' samaya nāi,
"kṛṣṇa bhaja" bala uccaiḥsvare

To awaken the living entities sleeping in ignorance you send the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, messengers of Lord Viṣṇu, house to house. These preachers call out loudly, "Brothers, arise! Arise! There is no more time! Just worship Kṛṣṇa!"

(16)

tomāra mukhāravinda, vigalita makaranda,
siñcita-acyuta-guṇa-gāthā
śuniye juḍāya prāna, tamo-moha-antardhāna,
dūre yāya hṛdayera vyathā

The glories of the infallible Lord flow like honey from your lotus mouth. Hearing your ambrosial speeches soothes the life-air, dispels the darkness of ignorance, and drives far away heartfelt pains.

(17)

jāni āmi mahāśaya, yaśo-vāñchā nāhi haya,
bindu-mātra tomāra antare
tava guṇa vīṇā-dhārī, mora kaṇṭha-vīnā dhari,
avaśete bolāya āmāre

O great personality, I know that in your heart there is not even a drop of desire for personal glorification. Your qualities are like a musician holding the vina of my voice, under whose control I play as he directs me.

(18)

vaiṣṇavera guṇa-gāna, karile jīvera trāṇa,
śuniyācchi sādhu-guru-mukhe
kṛṣṇa-bhakti-samudaya, janama saphala haya,
e-bhava-sāgara tare sukhe

1 have heard from sadhus and gurus that by glorifying the qualities of devotees, living entities may be delivered. By following various practices of devotional service, life becomes successful and the ocean of material existence is happily crossed.

(19)

te-kāraṇe e prayāsa, yathā vāmanera āśa,
gaganera cāṅda dharibāre
adoṣa-daraśī tumi, adhama patita āmi,
nija-guṇe kṣamibā āmāre

Thus I am trying to glorify you, in the manner of a dwarf attempting to catch the moon. I am fallen and wretched. But you do not see the faults of others, so by the strength of your qualities please forgive me.

(20)

śrī-gaurāṅga-pāriṣada, ṭhākura bhaktivinoda,
dīna hīna patitera bandhu
kali-tamo vināśite, ānilena avanīte,
tomā akalaṅka pūrṇa indu

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, an associate of Lord Caitanya and friend of the fallen, brought you into this world, who are the spotless full moon for destroying the darkness of Kali-yuga.

(21)

kara kṛpā-vitaraṇa, prema-sudhā anukṣaṇa,
mātiyā uṭhuka jīva-gaṇa
harināma-saṅkīrtane, nācuka jagata-ane,
vaiṣṇava-dāsera nivedane

Please continue to ceaselessly distribute the mercy and nectar of pure devotional service. Let all living entities become intoxicated with it. Let all people of the world dance in *harināma-saṅkīrtana.* This is the request of the servant of the devotees.

Śrī Śrī Prabhupāda-padma-stavakaḥ

(A Prayer to the Lotus Feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda)

by Śrīmad B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja

(1)

sujanārbuda-rādhita-pāda-yugaṁ
yuga-dharma-dhurandhara-pātra-varam
varadābhaya-dāyaka-pūjya-padaṁ
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam[*]

I constantly bow to the venerable Śrīla Prabhupāda. He is most competent to propagate the process of religion for this age. Millions of highly qualified devotees adore his worshipable feet, which bestow all benedictions and grant fearlessness.

(2)

bhajanorjita-sajjana-saṅgha-patiṁ
patitādhika-kāruṇikaika-gatim
gati-vañcita-vañcakācintya-padaṁ
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam

I eternally bow to the venerable Śrīla Prabhupāda. Pure devotees invigorated by loving devotional service hold him as their master, for he is extremely compassionate to the fallen and is their only refuge. His transcendental position is inconceivable for those who are deceived regarding the ultimate destination, and also for the deceivers.

(3)

ati-komala-kāñcana-dīrgha-tanuṁ
tanu-nindita-hema-mṛṇāla-madam
madanārbuda-vandita-candra-padaṁ
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam

I eternally bow to the venerable Śrīla Prabhupāda. His tall, golden form is exceptionally charming and delicate, mocking the pride of the golden lotus flower, and his moonlike effulgence is praised by millions of Cupids.

(4)

nija-sevaka-tāraka-rañji-vidhuṁ

vidhutāhita-huṅkṛta-siṁha-varam
varaṇāgata-bāliśa-śanda-padaṁ
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam

I eternally bow to the venerable Śrīla Prabhupāda. He is the moon delighting its surrounding stars, his intimate servitors, and is the most ferocious lion removing with his roar all hindrances on the path of devotion. Śrīla Prabhupāda's feet bestow good fortune to the innocent souls who have accepted him.

(5)

vipulī-kṛta-vaibhava-gaura-bhuvaṁ
bhuvaneṣu vikīrtita-gaura-dayam
ayanīya-gaṇārpita-gaura-padaṁ
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam

I eternally bow to the venerable Śrīla Prabhupāda. He broadcasted the glory of Gaura's holy land, caused the mercy of Gaura to be praised all over the world, and awarded Gaura's feet to all whom he favored.

(6)

cira-gaura-janāśraya-viśva-guruṁ
guru-gaura-kiśoraka-dāsya-param
paramādṛta-bhaktivinoda-padaṁ
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam

I eternally bow to the venerable Śrīla Prabhupāda. He is the guru of the whole universe and the eternal shelter for devotees of Gaura, yet he accepts service to his guru, Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī, as the highest principle and adores with utmost reverence the lotus feet of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

(7)

raghu-rūpa-sanātana-kīrti-dharaṁ
dharaṇī-tala-kīrtita-jīva-kavim
kavirāja-narottama-sakhya-padaṁ
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam

I eternally bow to the venerable Śrīla Prabhupāda. Carrying the glory of Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, he proclaimed in this world the genius of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī and is an object of friendship for Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī and Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura.

(8)

kṛpayā hari-kīrtana-mūrti-dharaṁ
dharaṇī-bhara-hāraka-gaura-janam
janakādhika-vatsala-snigdha-padaṁ
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam

I eternally bow to the venerable Śrīla Prabhupāda. Revealing his compassion, he is the very form of Hari-*kīrtana,* and as a personal associate of Gaura he removes the burden of the earth. He is the pleasing abode of an affection that exceeds even that of a father.

(9)

śaraṇāgata-kiṅkara-kalpa-taruṁ
taru-dhik-kṛta-dhīra-vadānya-varam
varadendra-gaṇārcita-divya-padaṁ
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam

I eternally bow to the venerable Śrīla Prabhupāda. The desire tree for the surrendered servitors, he puts all ordinary trees to shame with his unparalleled tolerance and magnanimity. The gods, themselves bestowers of benedictions, also worship his divine feet.

(10)

parahaṁsa-varaṁ paramārtha-patiṁ
patitoddharaṇe kṛta-veśa-yatim
yati-rāja-gaṇaiḥ pariṣevya-padaṁ
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam

I eternally bow to the venerable Śrīla Prabhupāda. Possessing pure love for Kṛṣṇa, the supreme objective of existence, he is the crown jewel among the most exalted transcendentalists. To deliver fallen souls, he accepted the dress of a sannyasi; and the foremost of renunciants attend his feet.

(11)

vṛṣabhānu-sutā-dayitānucaraṁ
caraṇāśrita-reṇu-dharas tam aham
mahad-adbhuta-pāvana-śakti-padaṁ
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam

I eternally bow to the venerable Śrīla Prabhupāda. He is a dear attendant of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. I place on my head the dust from his feet, the abode of immensely astonishing

purificatory potency.

Śrī Dayita-dāsa-praṇati-pañcakam

(Five Prayers of Submission to Śrī Dayita Dāsa)

by Śrīmad B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja

(1)

bhaya-bhañjana-jaya-śaṁsana-karuṇāyata-nayanam
kanakotpala-janakojjvala-rasa-sāgara-cayanam
mukharī-kṛta-dharaṇī-tala-hari-kīrtana-rasanam
kṣiti-pāvana-bhava-tāraṇa-pihitāruṇa-vasanam
śubhadodaya-divase vṛṣaravija-nija-dayitam
praṇamāmi ca raṇāntika-paricāraka-sahitam

On this holy day of his auspicious appearance, I bow to the beloved associate of Mahārāja Vṛṣabhānu's daughter and to the servitors of his lotus feet. His large, merciful eyes dispel fear and proclaim victory. By preaching and thus expanding the ocean of the topmost mellow, that of divine consorthood, from which ocean was born Lord Caitanya, he increases the number of devotees who are the shelter of this mellow.* Clad in red robes, he purifies the earth and delivers everyone from material existence by causing the earth to resound with Hari-*kīrtana.*

(2)

śaraṇāgata-bhajana-vrata-cira-pālana-caraṇam
sukṛtālaya-saralāśaya-sujanākhila-varaṇam
hari-sādhana-kṛta-bādhana-jana-śāsana-kalanam
sa-carācara-karuṇākara-nikhilāśiva-dalanam
śubhadodya-divase vṛṣaravija-nija-dayitam
praṇamāmi ca caraṇāntika-paricāraka-sahitam

On this holy day of his auspicious appearance, I bow to the beloved associate of Mahārāja Vṛṣabhānu's daughter, and to the servants of his lotus feet. Surrendered devotees, fixed in loving service of the Lord, are eternally protected at his lotus feet. Accepting all persons who are virtuous, simple-hearted, and gentle, he chastises those who create impediments on the path to attainment of Lord Hari. As the mine of compassion for both animate and inanimate living beings, he destroys everything inauspicious.

(3)

atilaukika-gati-taulika-rati-kautuka-vapuṣam
atidaivata-mati-vaiṣṇava-yati-vaibhava-puruṣam

sa-sanātana-raghu-rūpaka-paramānuga-caritam
suvicāraka iva jīvaka iti sādhubhir uditam
śubhadodaya-divase vṛṣaravija-nija-dayitam
praṇamāmi ca caraṇāntika-paricāraka-sahitam

His transcendental movements inspire joy and wonder in artists, his intelligence surpasses even that of the demigods, and he is the glory of Vaiṣṇava sannyasis. His activities reveal him to be the topmost follower of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. Saintly personalities declare him a genuine philosopher on the level of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī. On this holy day of his auspicious appearance, I bow to this beloved personal associate of Mahārāja Vṛṣabhānu's daughter, and to the servitors at his feet.

(4)

sarasī-taṭa-sukhadoṭaja-nikaṭa-priya-bhajanam
lalitā-mukha-lalanā-kula-paramādara-yajanam
vraja-kānana-bahu-mānana-kamala-priya-nayanam
guṇa-mañjarī-garimā-guṇa-hari-vāsana-vayanam
śubhadodaya-divase vṛṣaravija-nija-dayitam
praṇamāmi ca araṇāntika-paricāraka-sahitam

In the bower of Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja on the bank of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, he is engaged in intimate loving service to his beloved mistress. Worshiping with utmost adoration the hosts of cowherd girls headed by Śrī Lalitā-devī, he brings great pleasure to Śrī Kamala Mañjarī, who is highly respected throughout the forest of Vraja, and weaves the dress of Lord Hari with the threads of Śrī Guṇa Mañjarī's greatness.* On this holy day of his auspicious appearance, I bow to this beloved personal associate of Mahārāja Vṛṣabhānu's daughter, and to the servitors at his feet.

(5)

vimalotsavam amalotkala-puruṣottama-jananam
patitoddhṛti-karuṇāstṛti-kṛta-nūtana-pulinam
mathurā-pura-puruṣottama-sama-gaura-pur-aṭanam
hari-kāmaka-hari-dhāmaka-hari-nāmaka-ratanam
śubhadodya-divase vṛṣaravija-nija-dayitam
praṇamāmi ca caraṇāntika-paricāraka-sahitam

The joy of the goddess Vimalā, he appeared in Śrī Puruṣottama-*dhāma,* in the holy land of Orissa. Developing Śrī Navadvīpa-*dhāma* in order to uplift the fallen souls and spread mercy, he traveled throughout Gaura's town (which is nondifferent from Mathurā and Puruṣottama-*kṣetra*) promulgating the *kāma, dhāma,* and *nāma* of Lord Hari. On this holy day of his auspicious appearance, I bow unto this beloved personal associate of Mahārāja

Vṛṣabhānu's daughter, and to the servitors at his feet.

Śrī Śrī Dayita-dāsa-daśakam

(Ten Verses in Praise of Śrī Dayita dāsa)

by Śrīmad B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja

(1)

nīte yasmin niśānte nayana-jala-bharaiḥ snāta-gātrārbudānām
uccair utkrośatāṁ śrī-vṛṣakapi-sutayādhīrayā svīya-goṣṭhīm
pṛthvī gāḍhāndhakārair hṛta-nayana-maṇīvāvṛtā yena hīnā
yatrāsau tatra śīghraṁ kṛpaṇa-nayana he nīyatāṁ kiṅkaro 'yam

When the impatient daughter of Mahārāja Vṛṣabhānu, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, took him back at the end of night to rejoin Her entourage, a great cry of lamentation arose among countless griefstricken devotees, their bodies bathed by profuse tears. Bereft of him, the earth was enveloped by deep darkness, like a person who has lost the jewels of his eyes.* O my sorrowful eyes, please quickly lead this poor servant to wherever that great soul may be.

(2)

yasya śrī-pāda-padmāt pravahati jagati prema-pīyūṣa-dhārā
yasya śrī-pāda-padma-cyuta-madhu satataṁ bhṛtya-bhṛṅgān bibharti
yasya śrī-pāda-padmaṁ vraja-rasika-jano modate saṁpraśasya
yatrāsau tatra śīghraṁ kṛpaṇa-nayana he nīyatāṁ kiṅkaro 'yam

From his lotus feet a stream of ambrosial divine love of Kṛṣṇa flows throughout the universe. The honey oozing from them maintains the life of Kṛṣṇa's beelike servitors, and pure devotees who relish the confidential mellows of Vraja rejoice as they extol the glories of those lotus feet. O my sorrowful eyes, please quickly lead this poor servant to wherever that great soul may be.

(3)

vātsalyaṁ yac ca pitror jagati bahu-mataṁ kaitavaṁ kevalaṁ tad
dāmpatyaṁ dasyutaiva svajana-gaṇa-kṛtā bandhutā vañcaneti
vaikuṇṭha-sneha-mūrteḥ pada-nakha-kiraṇair yasya sandarśito 'smi
yatrāsau tatra śīghraṁ kṛpaṇa-nayana he nīyatāṁ kiṅkaro 'yam

Parental affection, so highly esteemed in this world, is nothing but a hoax, marital love is simply robbery, and friendship offered by kinsmen is mere deception. I have gleaned these truths from the effulgence emanating from the toenails of the holy feet of that merciful personality, the embodiment of supramundane affection. O my sorrowful eyes, please

quickly lead this poor servant to wherever that great soul may be.

(4)

yā vāṇī kaṇṭha-lagnā vilasati satataṁ kṛṣṇa-caitanya-candre
karṇa-kroḍāj janānāṁ kim u nayana-gatāṁ saiva mūrtiṁ prakāśya
nīlādrīśasya netrārpaṇa-bhavana-gatā netra-tārābhidheyā
yatrāsau tatra śīghraṁ kṛpaṇa-nayana he nīyatāṁ kiṅkaro 'yam

Has the divine message that was constantly sung when the Kṛṣṇa Caitanya moon was shining suddenly emerged from people's ears, only to assume a form visible to their eyes? Indeed, because this personified divine message appeared in the house favored by the glance of Lord Nīlācala-candra [i.e., at the time of the Ratha-yātrā festival], he is called the jewel of the eye.* O my sorrowful eyes, please quickly lead this poor servant to wherever that great soul may be.†

(5)

gaurendor asta-śaile kim u kanaka-ghano hema-hṛj jambu-nadyā
āvirbhūtaḥ pravarṣair nikhila-jana-padaṁ plāvayan dāva-dagdham
gaurāvirbhāva-bhūmau rajasi ca sahasā saṁjugopa svayaṁ svaṁ
yatrāsau tatra śīghraṁ kṛpaṇa-nayana he nīyatāṁ kiṅkaro 'yam

Having stolen the golden hue from the waters of the river Jambū, has this golden cloud arisen on the mountain where the moon of Lord Gaura set, just to shower torrents of rain upon all the towns and villages, burning as they are in the fire of the threefold sufferings?‡ And did it suddenly conceal itself in the dust of the land where Śrī Gaurāṅga appeared? O my sorrowful eyes, please quickly lead this poor servant to wherever that great soul may be.§

(6)

gauro gaurasya śiṣyo gurur api jagatāṁ gāyatāṁ gaura-gāthā gauḍe
gauḍīya-goṣṭhy-āśrita-gaṇa-garimā drāviḍe gaura-garvī
gāndharvā-gauravāḍhyo giri-dhara-parama-preyasāṁ yo gariṣṭho
yatrāsau tatra śīghraṁ kṛpaṇa-nayana he nīyatāṁ kiṅkaro 'yam¶

Although he is the guru of everyone who sings Lord Gaura's glories, he himself, whose complexion is also golden, has become a disciple of another Gaura: Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī. In Gauḍa-*maṇḍala* he is the pride of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, and in South India he proudly promotes Lord Gaura. Endowed with veneration for Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, he occupies the preeminent position among those dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the lifter of Govardhana Hill. O my sorrowful eyes, please quickly lead this poor servant to wherever that great soul may be.

(7)

yo rādhā-kṛṣṇa-nāmāmṛta-jala-nidhināplāvayad viśvam etad
ā-mlecchāśeṣa-lokaṁ dvija-nṛpa-vaṇijaṁ śūdra-śūdrāpakṛṣṭam
muktaiḥ siddhair agamyaḥ patita-jana-sakho gaura-kāruṇya-śaktir
yatrāsau tatra śīghraṁ kṛpaṇa-nayana he nīyatāṁ kiṅkaro 'yam

He inundated the entire universe of countless living beings— *brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas, śūdras,* those less than *śūdras,* down to and including even *mlecchas*—in the nectar-ocean that is the holy names of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. He is the mercy potency of Śrī Gaurāṅga, is a friend to all fallen souls, and is unapproachable even by liberated impersonalists or yogis endowed with various mystic powers.* O my sorrowful eyes, please quickly lead this poor servant to wherever that great soul may be.

(8)

apy āśā vartate tat puraṭa-vara-vapur lokituṁ loka-śandaṁ
dīrghaṁ nīlābja-netraṁ tila-kusuma-nasaṁ ninditārdhendu-bhālam
saumyaṁ śubhrāṁśu-dantaṁ śata-dala-vadanaṁ dīrgha-bāhuṁ vareṇyaṁ
yatrāsau tatra śīghraṁ kṛpaṇa-nayana he nīyatāṁ kiṅkaro 'yam

Is there any hope of ever again seeing that beautiful golden form that granted auspiciousness to everyone in this world? Is there any hope of again beholding that tall, handsome figure with blue lotus eyes, nose comparable to the sesame flower, forehead that shames the half-moon, graceful lotus face, gleaming pearl-white teeth, and long arms? O my sorrowful eyes, please quickly lead this poor servant to wherever that great soul may be.

(9)

gaurābde śūnya-bāṇānvita-nigama-mite kṛṣṇa-pakṣe caturthyāṁ
pauṣe māse maghāyām amara-gaṇa-guror vāsare vai niśānte
dāso yo rādhikāyā atiśaya-dayito nitya-līlā-praviṣṭo
yatrāsau tatra śīghraṁ kṛpaṇa-nayana he nīyatāṁ kiṅkaro 'yam

In the year 450 of Lord Gaurāṅga's era, on the fourth day in the dark fortnight of the month of Pauṣa, at the end of Thursday night (when the moon was in conjunction with the star Magha), that most beloved attendant of Śrīmatī Rādhikā reentered the eternal pastimes of Vraja. O my sorrowful eyes, please quickly lead this poor servant to wherever that great soul may be.*

(10)

hā-hā-kārair janānāṁ guru-caraṇa-juṣāṁ pūritā bhūr nabhaś ca

yāto 'sau kutra viśvaṁ prabhupada-virahād dhanta śūnyāyitaṁ me
pādābje nitya-bhṛtyaḥ kṣaṇam api viraham notsahe soḍhum atra
yatrāsau tatra śīghraṁ kṛpaṇa-nayana he nīyatāṁ kiṅkaro 'yam

On that day, devotees who were surrendered in service to Śrī Gurudeva's lotus feet filled the entire earth and sky with their cries of anguish. Alas! Where has that great master gone? In separation from Prabhupāda the whole universe now seems empty to me. This eternal servitor of his lotus feet cannot endure even a moment of separation from them. O my sorrowful eyes, please quickly lead this poor servant to wherever that great soul may be.

Another Verse by Śrī B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja

śrī-siddhānta-sarasvatīti vidito gauḍīya-gurv-anvaye
bhāto bhānur iva prabhāta-gagane yo gaura-saṅkīrtanaiḥ
māyāvāda-timiṅgilodara-gatān uddhṛtya jīvān imān
kṛṣṇa-prema-sudhābdhi-gāhana-sukhaṁ prādāt prabhuṁ taṁ bhaje

I worship that master known as Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī, who shines like the rising sun in the morning sky of the Gauḍīya *sampradāya.* By broadcasting the glories of Lord Gaura, he saved conditioned souls who were swallowed by the *timiṅgila* fish of Māyāvāda, and plunged them in the bliss of diving into the nectar-ocean of Kṛṣṇa-*prema.*

Appendixes

APPENDIX ONE

His Horoscope

Introductory Notes

Like a language, *jyotiṣa* describes both the profane and the sublime. Although conventional paradigms may be used in examining the horoscope of a pure devotee, it should be understood that he is *kṛṣṇa-graha-gṛhītātmā*—his whole existence having been seized by Kṛṣṇa, he is directed by Him only.[1]* Therefore out of respect for a *mahā-bhāgavata,* at the time of his birth the demigods presiding over stellar bodies assume spatial positions that proclaim his glory to the world through *jyotiṣa*.

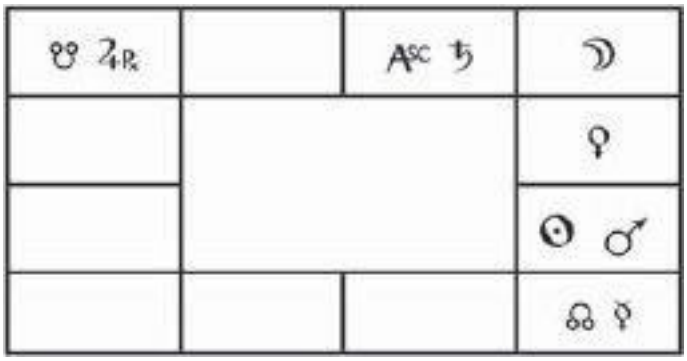
The following is based on a Vedic astrological reading by Śrī Śyāmasundara dāsa.† For the layman's benefit, certain astrological terms have been succinctly explained at the end of this section, but because the science of *jyotiṣa* is complex, much of the analysis will be intelligible only to experienced *jyotiṣīs*. Laymen who take the trouble to read this may at least glean insights into the intellectual complexities that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī relished.

Time of Birth

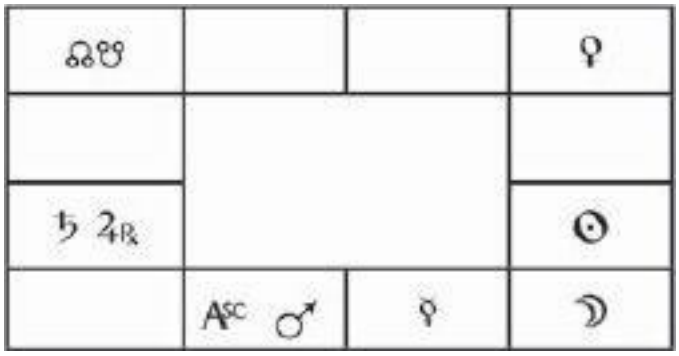
Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was born on 6 February 1874, at 15:30 Local Mean Time (LMT), in Purī, India.[‡] In the reading presented herein, the birth time has been taken as 15:28 LMT, according to a standard process of rectification applicable when a slight adjustment (in this case merely two minutes) yields an analysis considerably more consistent with the observed character and activities of the subject; the *lagna* remains unchanged and only some finer elements of the chart are affected.

Birth Chart

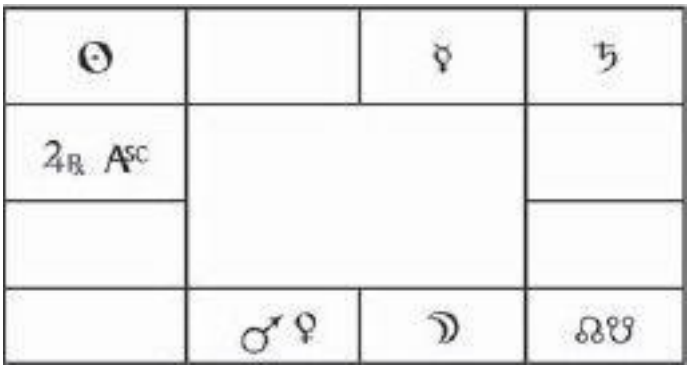
Navāṁśa



Viṁśāṁśa



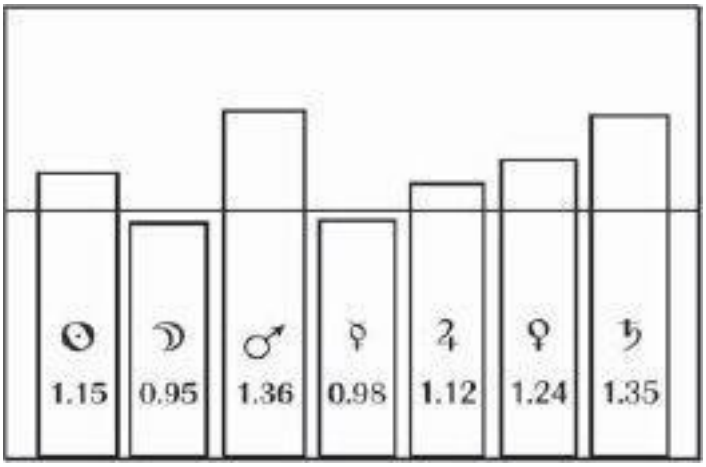
Cātur-viṁśāṁśa



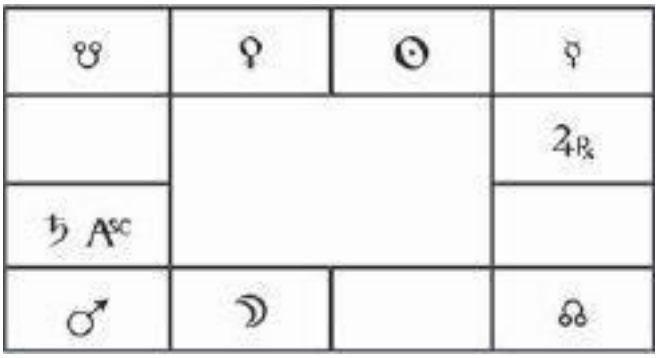
Viṁśottarī

☽	23 Nov 1866	23:43
♂	23 Nov 1876	09:50
☊	24 Nov 1883	02:31
♃	24 Nov 1901	11:09
♄	24 Nov 1917	08:09
☿	23 Nov 1936	22:35
♉	24 Nov 1953	01:24
♀	23 Nov 1960	18:05
☉	23 Nov 1980	14:20
☽	24 Nov 1986	01:13

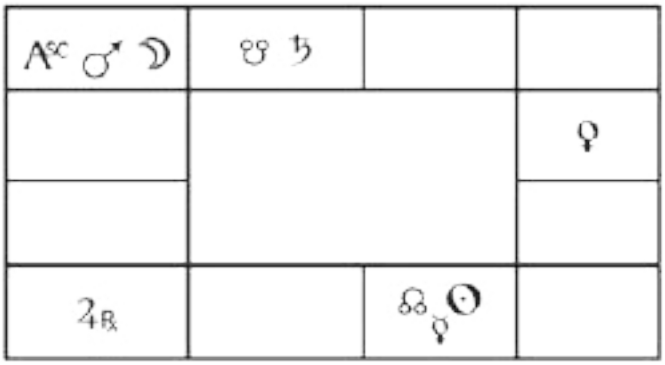
Ṣaḍ-bala



Daśāṁśa



Caturthāṁśa



Character and Personality: Overview

In Vedic astrology the most important factor is the *lagna,* which reveals the subject's basic characteristics and whence all further interpretation is derived. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's *lagna* is Mithuna-*rāśi,* whose quintessential quality is consciousness, specifically cognition. Although Mithuna may (as do all *rāśis*) indicate a wide spectrum of traits, both good and evil, in its better manifestations it reflects the developed intellect and intense curiosity of a person inclined to and expert in researching and communicating information and concepts—who is gregarious, nimble-minded, and witty and whose constantly active intelligence can quickly absorb and process reams of data. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was an extraordinarily effective propagator of ideas, an ardent, engaging, and winning conversationalist and lecturer who could interact with practically anyone. He expanded his communicative skills into all contemporary fields—organizing festivals, *parikramās,* and diorama exhibitions—but especially the print medium.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's *cātur-viṁśāṁśa* (V24, the *varga* chart for education) shows Kumbha-*rāśi* as the *lagna* occupied by Guru, and Śani (the *lagna* lord in the fifth) aspected by Guru, which indicate that not only was he able to quickly assimilate topics but also to retain them for long. Guru's presence further indicates boundless knowledge plus the ability to practically apply it in all facets of human existence, and counteracts the negativities common in other Mithunas (whereby generally the intelligence is highly active but unfocused, yielding the tendency to superficially investigate a topic then soon become distracted and go onto another—resulting in a little knowledge in many fields but mastery in none—or to be focused yet tend toward pedestrian or inessential topics). Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was a multi-tasker, not merely a dabbler—rather, a versatile genius, a genuinely profound thinker who was persistent, efficient, and accomplished in the various fields he entered, particularly *jyotiṣa,* mathematics, philosophy, sociology, and several languages.

The Chart Lord and Other Influences

The most important *graha* of an astrological chart is the *lagna-pati,* the *graha* who is the lord of the chart, ruling over the *rāśi* in which the *lagna* appears. Since the *lagna* represents the subject himself, the particular placement of the lord of the *lagna* gives further insight into the subject's character and personality. Often almost as important as the *lagna* is the position of Candra. Usually the main elements of the chart, especially when considering character and personality, are, in descending order of importance: the *lagna,* the *lagna* lord, the *rāśi* in which Candra appears, the Candra lord, and any *rāśi* or *bhāva* containing three or more *grahas.*

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's chart lord is Budha because Budha rules over Mithuna, where the *lagna* is situated. Budha is also the lord of Kanyā, the Candra-*rāśi,* and hence becomes the Candra lord. Moreover, since he rules both the *lagna* and the Candra-*rāśi,* his position is doubly significant. Budha is also placed in Makara-*rāśi* in the eighth *bhāva,* along with three other *grahas*—Śani, Sūrya, and Śukra—thus establishing Makara and the eighth *bhāva* as the fulcrum of this chart. Makara-*rāśi* and the eighth *bhāva* are highly prominent because they contain the chart lord and Candra lord and also four *grahas.* Śani is the lord of Makara-*rāśi,* the eighth *bhāva,* and the ninth *bhāva,* Kumbha. Śukra is the lord of the fifth and twelfth *bhāvas.* Sūrya is the lord of the third *bhāva.* In the eighth *bhāva* are the lords of the first, third, fourth, fifth, eighth, ninth, and twelfth *bhāvas,* thus forming an exceptionally powerful spiritual *rāja-yoga*—a combination that produces a king or prominent leader—because the lords of the first, fourth, fifth, and ninth *bhāvas* rule favorable *bhāvas.* Moreover, Guru, the lord of the tenth *bhāva,* aspects this stellium. And the conjunction of the fourth, eighth, and twelfth lords is powerful in another way.[*]

Influence of Makara

Makara-*rāśi* being an earth *rāśi,* coupled with the fact that in Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's chart most of the *grahas*—six out of ten *kārakas,* including the *lagna*—are in earth *rāśis,* indicates that although Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta was an intellectual who dwelled in the world of concepts, he was also down-to-earth and pragmatic in presenting his sublime vision for the understanding of common people. For example, his diorama displays, while fashioned from earth, nonetheless conveyed the highest non-earthly experiences possible for the soul.

The pragmatism and worldly wisdom associated with Makara was manifest also in Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's utilization of temporal resources. Although his consciousness was ever in the spiritual realm, he lived energetically on the physical plane as a goal-oriented leader, an organization-builder, and an extraordinary achiever.

Makara's powerful influence also suggests that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura felt called to fulfil a mission meant to effect great accomplishments within the world. Nor is this contradictory to his spirituality, for Makara also indicates Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's capacity for deep self-examination and for thorough analysis of his own motives and modus operandi, to keep himself on the proper track. His divine vocation necessitated that he externally express his overwhelming internal spiritual desires. He was an integrated person, inasmuch as his activities perfectly reflected his heartfelt desires, and in that his public role expressed his personal values and interests.

Makara indicates slowness. When favorable, it bestows determination, tenacity, patience, and discipline—qualities necessary for accomplishing anything worthwhile, whether material or spiritual. Success came to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī not simply through intellectual brilliance, but by hard work and persistence against opposition, and after a prolonged period of relative obscurity. The slowness of Makara is bolstered by the favorable position of Śani (similarly known as slow, careful, and meticulous) to indicate that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's swiftness of mind was tempered with the ability to focus on long-term goals, to be steady rather than flighty, and to persistently apply himself to a chosen course of action. His farsightedness was like that of a chess master, who can foresee many moves ahead. He could formulate a concept in seed potentiality and nurture it to fruition, envisioning and creating enduring projects that occupied him throughout his life and endured well after his disappearance. Thus he established the Gauḍīya Maṭha, and thus his foremost disciple, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda (also strongly influenced by Makara), founded ISKCON to continue the work of the Gauḍīya Maṭha. Moreover, if in the future even ISKCON were to flounder, then yet another institution would arise to perpetuate the mission initiated by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, for the principles that he conceived will surely survive.

Qualities such as organizational ability and perseverance are of course requisites even for mundane leaders. Hence, to understand what kind of organization Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

would create requires a study of his eighth bhāva, which is ruled by Makara. With so many planets therein, especially the chart lord, this bhāva is the focus of much energy and hence indicates Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's personal interests.

The Mokṣa-sthānas

In Vedic astrology, the first, fifth, and ninth *bhāvas* comprise the *dharma-sthānas;* the second, sixth, and tenth the *artha-sthāna;* the third, seventh, and eleventh the *kāma-sthānas;* and the eighth, fourth, and twelfth the *mokṣa-sthānas,* which represent spirituality. The *rāśis* Karkaṭa, Vṛścika, and Mīna are also *mokṣa-sthānas* because they are the fourth, eighth, and twelfth *bhāvas*, respectively, of the *kāla-puruṣa,* the Supreme Lord in the form of time.

In Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's chart, the two *grahas* Candra and Guru are in the fourth *bhāva* and (as previously mentioned) four *grahas* are in the eighth, including the chart lord, Budha. Moreover, Maṅgala is in Mīna, a natural *mokṣa-sthāna.* And although Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī has no *grahas* in the twelfth, that *bhāva* is nonetheless quite prominent because Śukra, the twelfth lord, is conjoined with Budha, the chart lord, and because Guru aspects the twelfth *bhāva.* Seven out of nine *grahas* being in the *mokṣa-sthānas,* and Budha (the *lagna* lord and chart lord) being the lord of the fourth *bhāva,* the *lagna* is therefore associated with the fourth lord, himself; the eighth lord, Śani; and the twelfth lord, Śukra. The fourth and eighth *bhāvas* are occupied and the twelfth *bhāva* is aspected. This highly activated state of the *mokṣa-sthānas* indicates that spirituality will strongly dominate the personality.

Among other things, the *mokṣa-sthānas* indicate the subject's attitude toward the past. Spiritually-minded persons see with the vision of eternity the continuity of all things—that what was important in the past is still important today and will be important in the future, and that while birth, disease, old age, and death are constant factors that define life in this material world, the soul's state of existence is beyond them.

The *mokṣa-sthānas* also shed light on the emotions, subconsciousness, and inner life of the subject, including his deepest desires and to what degree he requires privacy. If seriously afflicted, the twelfth, fourth, and eighth *bhāvas* may also indicate severe aberrations, such as mental illness; perversion; self-destructive, antisocial, or criminal behavior; predilection to black magic; or attacks by ghosts.

Eighth Bhāva: Two Extremes

In any astrological chart, most of the *bhāvas* indicate beneficial traits, but if afflicted they can become malefic. For instance, the ninth *bhāva* has dharma within its portfolio, but if afflicted it might indicate *adharma;* similarly, the fourth *bhāva* indicates the *sukha* (happiness) of the subject, which if afflicted becomes predominantly *duḥkha* (misery). The eighth *bhāva* has the most subtle and complex portfolio, indicated by two of its common names: *mṛtyu-sthāna* (the *bhāva* of death) and *āyu-sthāna* (the *bhāva* of life). It deals with the mysteries of life—hidden, subtle matters, including death and rebirth. It is commonly considered wholly inauspicious due to being associated with terror, horror, chronic disease, sexual desire and activity, and self-destructive behavior that is often performed clandestinely (murder, organized crime, prostitution, sexual perversion, psychosis, addiction to intoxicants, and the ruthless pursuit of power). It also signifies the genitalia and excretory organs, the portion of the physical body that is generally hidden and connected with the lowest aspects of existence.

However, the eighth *bhāva* may indicate not only the lowest and worst facets of existence but also the highest and best—not only sex and sexual perversion but also control of sexual energy for higher purposes, and not only death but also rebirth and transcendence of death. This *bhāva* is generally prominent in a consummate yogi's chart; to be successful, the yogi must conquer over the significations of the eighth *bhāva*.

Sexuality as associated with the eighth *bhāva* derives from and is intimately connected with humans' interdependent need for emotional bonds; hence the eighth *bhāva* also represents the quest for emotional gratification and security (which ultimately is attainable only by freedom from material desires), and stands for *anartha-nivṛtti (*the purification and elimination of unwanted desires).* It is like a crucible in which impurities are burned up so that only pure substance remains. According to Vaiṣṇava understanding, emotional needs can be fully satisfied only through a relationship with Kṛṣṇa, and mundane psychological, emotional, and sexual cravings are but perverse reflections of the nectarean experience of the soul's union with Kṛṣṇa in surrendered service to Him. Therefore the highest manifestation of the eighth *bhāva* is found in the horoscope of a transcendentalist—Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura undoubtedly being one such transcendentalist of the topmost order—who transcends mundane desire and sentimentality to unite with the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The eighth *bhāva* also oversees the occult sciences—astrology, palmistry, divination, and so on—and all kinds of research and investigation. The word *occult* is derived from the Latin *occultus* (covered, hidden) and thus denotes concealed or secret knowledge. Occult studies ultimately aim at attaining inner fulfilment through knowledge of the deepest principles of existence. Persons whose eighth *bhāva* is favorable exhibit keen interest, whether physical or metaphysical, in understanding the hidden laws of the cosmos, and are able to pierce through superficial or false understandings to reach a deep, holistic comprehension of any subject.

The eighth *bhāva* pertains both to knowledge of the occult and to practical application of the

purifying transformative energy of various forms of spirituality, healing, and mysticism. It also oversees transformation, whether regenerative or degenerative: creation and destruction, birth and death, purification and corruption, the pinnacles of spiritual existence and also the lowest troughs of material existence. It gives the capacity for self-transformation and the ability to transform others.

The Sublime Nature of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta's Eighth Bhāva

That Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's eighth *bhāva* reveals sublimity rather than degradation is clear from the following:

Guru fully aspects the eighth *bhāva,* suggesting upliftment;

The eighth lord is in the eighth *bhāva* and is aspected by Guru, a combination that always yields favorable results; Budha, the chart lord, is in the eighth *bhāva* and in the *navāṁśa* of Kanyā, Budha's *rāśi* of exaltation; Guru, who influences six *grahas,* has a powerful purifying effect;

Guru is conjunct with Candra in the fourth *bhāva,* and since both this *graha* and *bhāva* represent the mind, the combination suggests a pure and *sāttvika* mind;

Guru conjuct with Candra in the fourth *bhāva* constitutes *gaja-keśarī-yoga,* which protects the character and gives positive effects;

Guru aspects the lord of the *lagna* and also the lord of the fourth *bhāva,* thus further indicating purity of character and mind.

Overall, the powerful *sāttvika* effect of Guru ensures that the eighth *bhāva* will exert positive influences.

The position of Śani (the lord of the eighth *bhāva*) in critical *varga-cakras* gives additional insight as to how the eighth *bhāva* would manifest:

In the *navāṁśa* (V9), next in importance to the natal chart, Śani is the *yoga-kāraka* (most favorable *graha*), which when placed in the *lagna suggests* a strong inclination for dharma. And Śani in the *navāṁśa lagna* often indicates delayed or no marriage.

In *viṁśāṁśa* (V20), which indicates spirituality, Śani is again in his own *rāśi,* Makara, a powerful position that suggests exceptionally strong proclivity for spiritual pursuit. Moreover, the *lagna* lord, Maṅgala, is in the *lagna* and hence auspicious.

In *cātur-viṁśāṁśa* (V24), which governs knowledge, Guru in the *lagna* aspects the *lagna* lord, Śani, in the fifth *bhāva.* Guru signifies *vidyā,* and Śani *vairāgya*—two essential components for spiritual life— and this combination indicates extraordinary amassment of pure

knowledge.

In *daśāṁśa* (V10), which influences career, reputation, and accomplishments, Śani is the *lagna* lord and is in the *lagna,* a particularly strong position indicative of good character and reputation.

All of these important *varga* charts suggest that Śani, who rules the eighth *bhāva,* is positive. Not only does he rule the potentially troublesome eighth *bhāva* but also the ninth, the most auspicious in the chart. Since this situation of Śani suggests a positive effect for the dangerous eighth *bhāva,* then what to speak of the beneficial ninth *bhāva*? It too becomes greatly enhanced.

Probing for the most profound meaning of human life and universal existence was intrinsic to Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. A deep investigator, never satisfied with superficial perception, he craved to understand, and was gifted with clear insight into, the fundamental phenomena of whatever he focused his attention on. Early in life, he was introduced to the occult subjects *jyotiṣa* and *arcana.* His boyhood worship of Kūrmadeva, of whom Śani is a manifestation, is congruous with the prominence of Śani in his chart. And his having later undertaken a *śata-koṭi-nāma-yajña* underlines his status as a *nitya-siddha*— for although spiritualists accept austerities to control the mind and senses, ordinary mortals are unable to perform such severe *tapasya* as did Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, or to so completely dedicate themselves to *harināma.* From the astrological perspective, because he began the *śata-koṭi-nāma-yajña* during his Guru *mahā-daśā* and Śani *bhukti,* involving the eighth *bhāva,* it imbued him with the extraordinary spiritual strength needed to effect his future colossal achievements: creating a transformational process in others who themselves would subsequently be capable of transforming yet others, and so on, in a chain reaction. That his reformatory process began in that period is, again, influenced by the eighth *bhāva,* which is ruled by Śani and aspected by Guru.

The transformation process also applies to sexual energy: Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was a *naiṣṭhika-brahmacārī.*

Makara, the *rāśi* governing the eighth *bhāva,* indicates Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's vocation, or calling, and the long-term vision whereby he ultimately created a spiritual organization dedicated to teaching the deepest secrets of existence—the *sambandha, abhideya,* and *prayojana* of the soul—for finally reuniting the soul with Bhagavān via the process of transformation and reformation recommended in *śāstra* as the *yuga*-dharma for Kali-yuga: chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa.

More Effects of the Stellium in Makara in the Eighth Bhāva

The crucial influence of Makara in the eighth *bhāva* is enhanced by other *grahas* and their combinations:

Budha, the chart lord, is conjoined with Sūrya, lord of the third *bhāva,* yielding Budha-Āditya-

yoga, indicating a highly intelligent person—further borne out by Śukra as lord of the fifth *bhāva* in conjunction with Budha, the chart lord. Sūrya, a robustly masculine *graha,* rules the third *bhāva,* also known as *vikrama-sthāna* (the house of great courage, energy, and intrepid spirit). Hence, Sūrya being conjunct with the chart ruler suggests the indomitable courage and vigor that were hallmarks of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's character. This is confirmed also by Maṅgala's aspecting the *lagna,* Guru, and Candra.

Śukra and Śani rule not only the twelfth and eighth *bhāvas* respectively, but also the auspicious fifth and ninth (both of which are *bhāvas* of dharma). The principal features in the portfolio of the fifth *bhāva* are executive ability, education, chanting and learning mantras, piety, intelligence, memory, wisdom, and foresight. A strong fifth *bhāva* is important for any type of advisory function—for instance, for a minister to give sage counsel, an astrologer to predict, or a physician to diagnose.

As previously discussed, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura is "past oriented" because of his great knowledge and interest in the Vedas and the soul; but since that knowledge is eternal, it is wholly relevant today and will also be tomorrow. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was not mired in the past; he certainly contemplated the future. The favorable fifth *bhāva,* which indicates the capacity to be an advisor, is thus supplemented by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's ability to apply ancient knowledge both to current and to posterior circumstances. This is fortified by Guru, a future-oriented planet, aspecting Makara.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's being like a spiritual thunderbolt is indicated by Budha's proximity to Sūrya, and by Maṅgala's position in the tenth *bhāva* in the natal chart and being the *lagna* lord in *viṁśāṁśa.* Śukra's conjunction with Budha, and Guru conjunct with Candra and aspecting Budha, temper harshness with deep underlying kindness, tenderness, and consideration for others—hard as a thunderbolt, soft as a rose. The Śukra-Budha combination in the eighth *bhāva* enhances memory and remembrance. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's legendary memory is also related to his fourth, eighth, and twelfth *bhāvas,* all of which are related to the past, and to the fifth lord, representing memory.

Budha, the chart lord, is also conjoined with the ninth lord, Śani. The most auspicious *bhāva* in any chart is the ninth, and its lord is the most auspicious *graha;* hence in Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's chart, Budha's association with the ninth lord can only be favorable. The ninth *bhāva* represents Guru, the preceptor, thus suggesting education, expansion of consciousness, and search for the meaning of life. The *bīja* (seed meaning) of the ninth *bhāva* is *athāto brahma-jijñāsā*—inquiry into the absolute truth and the purpose of existence— and a philosophically founded life. The ninth *bhāva* is so similar to the fifth that it may be considered an extension of the principles indicated therein. A strong fifth *bhāva* signifies an advisor, and similarly the ninth represents a guru. That these two are strong in Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's chart indicates that he is an advisor and guru par excellence who employs his learning and wisdom to help transform disciples and the general populace from materialists into transcendentalists. Favorable fifth and ninth *bhāvas* indicate good fortune, as seen in Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's life: his birth in a

spiritually advanced family and his possessing exceptional knowledge, fame, wealth, and renunciation.

Generally Budha is the only *graha* who is naturally favorable when placed in the eighth *bhāva,* which is how he appears in Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's chart yet is enhanced by Budha's association with the fifth and ninth lords. This combination indicates unparalleled spiritual genius and tremendous knowledge and learning. Knowledge came to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī from his first guru, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, from his *dīkṣā*-guru, Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī, from his own reading, studies, and research, and ultimately by the grace of Lord Kṛṣṇa, from the deepest regions of his heart, from his past memories and introspection:

sarvasya cāhaṁ hṛdi sanniviṣṭo
mattaḥ smṛtir jñānam apohanaṁ ca
vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyo
vedānta-kṛd veda-vid eva cāham

I am seated in everyone's heart, and from Me come remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness. By all the Vedas I am to be known. Indeed, I am the compiler of Vedānta and am the knower of the Vedas. (Bg 15.15)

Knowledge also came to him as a corollary of his devotional activities:

vāsudeve bhagavati bhakti-yogaḥ prayojitaḥ
janayaty āśu vairāgyaṁ jñānaṁ ca yad ahaitukam

By rendering devotional service unto the Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, one immediately acquires causeless knowledge and detachment from the world. (SB 1.2.7)

The fourth, eighth, and twelfth *bhāvas* are the *guhya-* or *gupta-sthānas* (places of secrets). This factor, as well as Budha's being in the eighth *bhāva* and conjuct with the fifth and ninth lords, was actualized by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's inquiring into and unearthing the most valuable nuggets of spiritual knowledge—knowledge of pure devotional service to Kṛṣṇa—and then distributing them.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's chart shows an exception to the general rule that Budha is the only naturally favorable *graha* in the eighth *bhāva,* because in this case Śani, whose influence is benefic, rules this *bhāva.* And also, as previously noted, Guru's aspect turns the situation from unfavorable to favorable. Since Budha has an asexual energy, he gives the favorable effect of dispassionate intelligence and discrimination for dealing with the potentially destructive sexual energy of the eighth *bhāva.* Astrological authorities highly praise the effect of Budha in the eighth *bhāva:*

He will receive respect in his twenty-fifth year. He will be accorded respect and honor in many ways and will attain widespread fame and reputation. (*Bṛghu-sūtra*)

He will be widely known for his good qualities and will have authority to award punishment. He will have extensive reputation and a long life. He will be a supporter of his family and will be full of good qualities. (*Bṛhat-jātaka*)

He will be famous, glorious, powerful, long-lived, and a supporter of his family. He will be like a king or judge. (*Sārāvalī*)

He will live for one hundred years. He will enjoy good reputation not only in his native land but also abroad. He will acquire wealth by the favor of a king or by doing business in the company of women. (*Camatkāra-cintāmaṇi*)

These being general statements, the actual outcome depends on other factors in the chart, but the consensus is that Budha is favorable in the eighth *bhāva.*

Budha is the lord of the *lagna* representing the physical body. When in the eighth *bhāva,* it can lead to a dearth of physical pleasure, which in Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's case is actualized by his voluntarily undergoing many austerities.

Śukra, as lord of the fifth and twelfth *bhāvas,* is in the eighth *bhāva* and thus indicates two conditions generally considered highly inauspicious: breaks in formal education and the loss of children (or in this case, problematic disciples). Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī volitionally left college before completion of his studies, and later he refused the chair of astronomy at Calcutta University; in the final phase of his pastimes he was troubled by certain disciples. Yet this placement also includes some clearly positive aspects. *Bṛghu-saṁhitā* states: "He realizes many achievements through intellect, by his great depth and application of wisdom. He accomplishes work through contact with foreign places. He succeeds by the strength of mysterious knowledge in the *bhāva* of education."* All of these were apparent in the activities of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.

Regarding Śani in Makara in the eighth *bhāva,* the same text further states: "gives long age"—which, for other reasons (to be discussed later), Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura did not have; "obtains lasting gain of the old and serious, thus helping the life career" (here "the old and serious" indicates occult and transcendental knowledge); and "makes progress through union with foreign countries." This fits with Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's congenial interactions with the British lords of India, to the extent that they cooperated with his sending representatives to preach in their country.

The activation of the fourth, eighth, and twelfth *bhāvas* by placement of planets or aspect indicates that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was an exceptionally deep person whose true identity can be known only by similarly great souls; most cannot actually see him, and what they see they cannot fathom. His personality may be likened to an iceberg, the bulk of which remains below the surface with only the tip visible.

Fourth Bhāva: Happiness, Environment, Disposition

In Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's chart Candra and Guru are present in the fourth *bhāva,* which is formed by Kanyā-*rāśi* and is thus ruled by Budha because Budha rules Kanyā.

The *bīja* meaning of Kanyā is purity and perfection. Those influenced by Kanyā-*rāśi* strive after an ideal and simultaneously analyze their own flaws. They are perfectionists, sometimes to their detriment. But in Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's chart, the tendency toward overscrupulousness is prevented by the placement of Guru, which complements attention to details with both expertise in many spheres and the panoramic overview of a visionary. Unlike people who are so much concerned with details that they cannot comprehend the complete reality, or who have broad vision but achieve little due to neglecting finer points, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was balanced in dealing with matters both minutely, as shown by Candra in Kanyā, and comprehensively, as indicated by Guru with Candra.

Like Mithuna, Kanyā is associated with communication, specifically printing and publishing—which was central to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's life. As the natural sixth *rāśi,* Kanyā is associated with medicine and curing, manifested in Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's activities meant for healing people's soul.

Guru and Candra in the fourth *bhāva* signify birth into a transcendental family tradition that will be the basis of a profound inquiring personality. The combination of Mithuna as the *lagna* and Candra in Kanyā indicates tremendous capacity for analysis and explication. Persons with strong Kanyā may be highly critical, but the combinations of Guru with Candra and Śukra close to Budha reveal a gentle and compassionate nature. Depending upon whom the subject is dealing with, he may be either tender and generous, or sharply critical, analytically dissecting, and uncompromising. He is not stereotyped—he is like both a rose and a thunderbolt—especially because both Mithuna (*lagna*) and Kanyā (Candra-*rāśi*) are dual *rāśis* that award flexibility according to the ambient environment.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had a powerful *dhana-yoga* (a combination that indicates wealth) because Maṅgala, lord of the eleventh *bhāva,* which represents gain, is in his most powerful *bhāva* (the tenth) and is in opposition to Candra, the lord of the second *bhāva* (wealth), and Guru, the lord of the seventh and tenth *bhāvas*. This suggests that wealth came through Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's own efforts (tenth *bhāva*), public support (fourth), close associates (seventh), higher social circles (eleventh), speaking ability (second), and destruction of his opponents (sixth). The *caturthāṁśa* (V4), which indicates *bhāgya* (fortune), also signifies wealth, for the lords of the fifth and ninth *bhāvas* are in the first *bhāva,* and because Guru, the lord of the first *bhāva,* is in his own *rāśi* in the tenth *bhāva* aspecting the second. Since this *dhana-yoga* is located in the fourth *bhāva* and involves Maṅgala, it indicates large-scale acquisition of land and buildings. Although destined to be affluent, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was also generous, as indicated by Candra, the lord of the second *bhāva* (wealth), being conjunct

with Guru, the planet of faith (especially in Bhagavān). This combination suggests generosity based on the faith that Bhagavān will supply all necessities and that one will not be deprived by giving to others.

The second *bhāva* is called the *vāk-sthāna* (that which governs speech). Its lord, Candra, is conjunct with Guru in Kanyā, indicating Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's exceptionally cultured, learned, powerful, grave, and profound mode of speech. Furthermore, he possessed *vāk-siddhi*—whatever he spoke would happen.

The fourth *bhāva* is the *sukha-sthāna,* which represents state of mind and degree of happiness. That Guru and Candra are placed therein bespeaks Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's naturally happy disposition. Moreover, because most of his *grahas* were in earth *rāśis*, indicative of a serious demeanor, his happiness was deep, not superficial or frivolous.

The Guru-Candra combination also forms *gaja-keśarī-yoga,* the importance of which may be inferred by its being the first listed in *Three Hundred Important Combinations*, wherein it is defined thus:

> If Jupiter is in a *kendra* (quadrant) from Moon, the combination goes under the name of *gaja-keśarī.* This indicates many relations, [that the subject is] polite and generous, [is a] builder of villages and towns or [a] magistrate over them, or has a lasting reputation even long after death.

Commentary

> The original texts say that the person born in this yoga will build villages and towns. Verbatim interpretation of the results leads one nowhere; they have to be adapted to modern conditions and climate. One born in this yoga may become a leader of a municipality or, if the yoga is really powerful, a leader of a much larger community.*

It is thus clear that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would be the leader of a large community and would have a lasting reputation.

The fourth *bhāva* refers also to family background and origins, specifically to the mother. The Guru-Candra combination in Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's chart suggests that his mother is an elevated personality who will have a positive, nurturing effect on him. A close relationship with the father is also indicated (which factually was so) because Budha, the chart lord, is associated with Sūrya, the natural *kāraka* for the father, and with the ninth lord Śani—again suggesting the father, since the ninth *bhāva* also rules matters concerning the father.

Bṛghu-saṁhitā states:

> Candra in the fourth *bhāva* in Kanyā leads to acquiring wealth through sizable land holdings and buildings and indicates both a good connection with the mother and

> happiness derived from wealth. The subject will prosper in business, be honored by lords and the general populace, be patient and of peaceful mind, acquire commodities, attain great happiness within the home and family, progress with equanimity toward success, and consequently be deeply satisfied at heart.

Candra as the second lord in the fourth *bhāva* fully bestows positive gains—material, spiritual, and emotional. Yet the presence of Maṅgala, who is lord of not only the eleventh *bhāva* (of wealth) but also the sixth (that of enemies), was manifest by his disciples' eventually quarreling over Gauḍīya Maṭha property.

Bṛghu-saṁhitā further states:

> Guru in the fourth bestows happiness from one's occupation, and also honor, both from the mother and the father; the subject will be industrious, honorable, and will undertake routine daily activities in a dignified, lofty manner. Happiness and honor will accrue from the government and society, major holdings in land and buildings will be acquired, and he will be very happy at heart due to successful business ventures.

The fourth *bhāva* is also *mānasa-sthāna,* the *bhāva* of mind. Both Guru and Candra being *sāttvika,* their combination suggests a pure mind.

All of the above descriptions fit Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.

Parivraja-yogas

In classic Vedic astrology, when a *rāśi* contains four or more *grahas*—as in Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's chart—and if supported by other factors, it constitutes a *parivraja-yoga,* or *sannyāsa-yoga*. Śani, who governs *tapas* (austerity) and *vairāgya* (renunciation), is the main *kāraka* of *parivraja-yoga.* Another *parivraja-yoga* is formed when Śani aspects the *lagna* (or its lord), Candra, and also Guru, and in Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's chart there are mutual relationships between all three of these. Śani is in his own *rāśi,* has conjoined the *lagna* lord, and aspects Candra's *rāśi.* Candra is conjoined with Guru, who in turn aspects Śani, and Śani also aspects a *rāśi* ruled by Guru. That this suggests a *parivraja-yoga* is bolstered by Śani's being the ninth and tenth lords in the *lagna* of the *navāṁśa* chart.

Chronological Analysis

The aforementioned patterns in a subject's personality and activities seldom manifest simultaneously but are usually distributed throughout different periods of his lifetime. To determine when the influences indicated by the horoscope will manifest, *ṛṣis* have employed various systems of prognosis, collectively called the *mahā-daśā* system. Among the many *mahā-daśā* systems of Vedic astrology, the most popular is *viṁśottarī mahā-daśā,* which was used herein to analyze the chronology of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's life.

Candra mahā-daśā

Birth (6 February 1874) until 23 November 1876 (age two years and almost ten months)

Since Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was born with Candra in *hasta-nakṣatra,* which according to *viṁśottarī mahā-daśā* is ruled by Candra himself, his Candra period was running at birth and continued until 23 November 1876, almost three years. Since Candra is in the fourth *bhāva,* the influence of the mother is very powerful. Moreover, Candra is exceptionally strong in the *viṁśāṁśa* chart. Conjunct with Guru in the fourth *bhāva,* it shows a *sāttvika* mother and a *sāttvika* family background and also suggests that he would be well known and popular and achieve recognition even at a young age. During this period a famous incident occurred: the Ratha-yātrā cart stopped in front of the family home of child Bimalā Prasāda, and the Lord's garland fell upon the child, indicating Jagannātha's blessings and also the child's future greatness.

Maṅgala mahā-daśā

23 November 1876 to 23 November 1883 (approximate age span: three to ten)

Maṅgala is the lord of the sixth *bhāva* (enemies and difficulties). Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's vow to never again eat mango occurred toward the beginning of his Maṅgala period, and although apparently a setback, this incident demonstrated Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's extraordinary devotion and determination. Maṅgala is also the lord of the eleventh *bhāva* (indicative of gains, friends, and influence) and furthermore is the significator for brothers, especially those junior—portending disagreements with younger brothers (which actually occurred between Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and Śrī Lalitā Prasāda). Maṅgala in the tenth *bhāva* is highly favorable, denoting a dynamic personality and organizational ability, but (as the sixth lord) possibly also negative character traits. Yet the various *varga* charts associated with this reading show Maṅgala's negative potential to be neutralized and rendered positive. That Maṅgala is in his own *rāśi* in the *lagna* in Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's *viṁśāṁśa* chart, which concerns *upāsanā,* indicates Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's strong spirituality. Indeed, from the earliest age Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura demonstrated a deeply spiritual personality. When only seven, he had memorized and could explain the entire *Bhagavad-gītā,* and also was initiated by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura into different mantras and *arcana.*

Rāhu mahā-daśā

24 November 1883 to 24 November 1901 (approximate age span: ten to twenty-eight)

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's Rāhu period began when he was almost ten years old. Normally the Rāhu period is full of obstacles and is the worst in one's life, but Rāhu is positive when, as in this case, it is in Meṣa-*rāśi* and the eleventh *bhāva,* both of which are propitious for Rāhu; and in this chart Rāhu is also the yogi, signifying wealth. The eleventh *bhāva* augurs easy gain, and in Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's chart all the *grahas,* including Rāhu, are favorably situated, implying that economic, educational, and spiritual gain would come almost of their own accord.

Since Rāhu is in the eleventh *bhāva,* Ketu must be in the fifth, for they are always 180 degrees apart. Like Rāhu, Ketu generally destroys the significations of the *bhāva* in which it is situated. Ketu in the fifth *bhāva* suggests that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura will experience distress, especially on account of wards. Moreover, if, as in this case, Ketu in the fifth or ninth *bhāva* is supported by other planetary placements (in *navāṁśa,* Ketu is conjunct with Guru in Mīna and aspected by Budha from Kanyā, which is highly favorable in such placements) it signifies *tri-janma-jñāna*—knowledge of one's past, present, and future lifetimes—attainable either through *jyotiṣa* or as a *siddhi* resulting from spiritual advancement, either of which was possible for Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

The Rāhu *mahā-daśā* for Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī shows both spiritual and material progress. Spiritual progress is indicated by Rāhu in *viṁśāṁśa* being situated in the fifth *bhāva* in Rāhu's favorable *rāśi,* Mīna, and being aspected by both the ninth lord and Śani. This tendency for the spiritual is indicated also in *navāṁśa,* where Rāhu is conjoined with an exalted Budha in the fifth *bhāva*. During this period, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī continued his spiritual activities, especially due to his close association with Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. He also undertook research into various *sampradāyas,* wrote on spiritual topics, toured holy places, and most importantly, received spiritual initiation from Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's material progress, especially in *jyotiṣa,* was also remarkable. His quitting college would, to ordinary vision, naturally seem to be a setback (as it hindered the prospect of marriage), but Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's outlook was radically different, and thus he deliberately chose to quit college, considering that non-entanglement in family life would be conducive for his life mission of pure devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. His producing of books and articles on *jyotiṣa* started in boyhood, during the Rāhu-Guru *bhukti* (began 6 August 1886), and became more pronounced in the Rāhu-Śani *bhukti* (began 29 December 1888). (Śani in the eighth *bhāva* naturally indicates the publishing of books on occult subjects.)

In Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's chart, the Rāhu-Sūrya *bhukti* began on 12 June 1898. Sūrya as the eighth lord in *daśāṁśa* and placed in the fifth *bhāva* indicates a change in the life direction. That it will be positive is intimated by Sūrya's highly powerful situation in both *navāṁśa* and *viṁśāṁśa,* the latter indicating change from material to spiritual life. Although throughout this

sub-period Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura remained employed by the Tripura kings and active in *jyotiṣa,* in late 1898 he first had *darśana* of Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, who would transform Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's entire outlook, and from whom Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura (during this *bhukti*) received initiation.

Guru mahā-daśā

24 November 1901 to 24 November 1917 (approximate age span: twenty-eight to fourty-four)

Guru indicates knowledge—especially transcendental knowledge—and spiritual inclination, and for Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī this period prior to his accepting *sannyāsa* was marked by intense *bhajana* and concentrated acquisition of spiritual knowledge. Guru being conjunct with Candra in the fourth *bhāva,* which governs one's basic foundations, it was concordantly during this time that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī conducted much research into the essentials of Vedic culture—knowledge that he would later use to great effect. Within the Guru-Śani *bhukti* (beginning on 12 January 1904) he started his *śata-koṭi-nāma-yajña* and also initiated his first disciples. And during the Guru-Candra-Śukra *antardaśā* (11 April–1 July 1914) his father left this world. This is noteworthy because it helps verify the time of birth. Although both Guru and Candra are natural benefics, they are also *mārakas* (death-inflicting *grahas*), as lords of the seventh and second *bhāvas* respectively. Furthermore, counting from the ninth *bhāva* of the father, Guru and Candra are in the eighth *bhāva* (death), and Śūkra in *dvādaśāṁśa* (V12, which relates to parents) is the eighth lord posited in the *māraka-sthāna* (seventh *bhāva*) in debilitation, all of which concur with the father's passing away at that time.

Śani mahā-daśā

24 November 1917 to 24 November 1936 (approximate age span: fourty-four to sixty-three)

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's chart is unusual in that the Śani major period is significantly more fruitful than the Guru period. The latter bestowed acquisition of knowledge, and thereafter Śani engaged that knowledge for practical achievement. In Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's *rāśi* chart, Śani is in the eighth *bhāva* in his own *rāśi* and is aspected by Guru; in the *navāṁśa* chart he is the *yoga-kāraka* in the *lagna;* and in the *daśāṁśa* chart he is in his own *rāśi* in the *lagna*, indicating great accomplishments and high prestige. Because Śani is particularly powerful in *ṣaḍ-bala* (the six-fold planetary strength), at the start of the Śani period everything becomes energized, especially for one who, by accepting vows of renunciation, is attuned to Śani's energy. In the *viṁśāṁśa* (which indicates spirituality) of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's chart, Śani is strong in his own *rāśi;* in the *cātur-viṁśāṁśa* (which governs knowledge, education and erudition), Śani is the *lagna* lord in the fifth *bhāva* aspected by Guru. All of these placements mean that Śani *mahā-daśā* must be Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's brilliant period. Veritably, during that time all of his endeavors flourished: he established a major spiritual movement, initiated several thousand disciples, addressed thousands of assemblies, floated several periodicals, published many books, and, as a result of those activities, became famous. (As a *jyotiṣī,*

possibly he deliberately structured his endeavors to take advantage of this auspicious *mahā-daśā.*)

The turning point for Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was on 29 March 1918, the day he accepted *sannyāsa.* This was within his Śani-Śani-Śani sub-sub-period, during which Śani's influence of bestowing renunciation was maximized. Although he certainly had been leading a highly renounced life even prior to accepting *sannyāsa,* his formal pronouncement of renunciation vows definitely terminated any prospect of his returning to secular life or undertaking any endeavor other than spiritual.

In Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's chart, both Śani and Śukra are lords of *mokṣa-sthānas* and *dharma-sthānas,* which presages the occurrence of a notably positive incident or event. Indeed, on 5 February 1919, during his Śani-Śani-Śukra *antardaśā,* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī established the Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā, the forerunner to and parent organization of the Gauḍīya Maṭha.

Budha mahā-daśā

23 November 1936 to disappearance

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura left the earthly plane on 1 January 1937 at about 5:30 a.m.—at the very outset of the Budha *mahā-daśā,* when also there was Budha *bhukti* and Budha *antardaśā,* that is, the Budha-Budha-Budha *antardaśā.* Budha's influence upon the time of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's disappearance is deduced from Budha, the *lagna* lord, being in the *mṛtyu-sthāna* —the eighth *bhāva,* that of death—and also being associated with the third lord, Sūrya, who rules the eighth *bhāva* from the eighth *bhāva.* The eighth and third *bhāvas,* as also the second and seventh, are all *māraka-sthānas* (death-inflicting).[*]

Budha as the *lagna* lord and only planet that is generally considered favorable in the eighth *bhāva* will give overall positive effects throughout the subject's life; but when Budha's planetary period comes into effect, other factors must be considered. For example, Budha rules the fourth *bhāva,* which has two *mārakas*—Candra and Guru, the second and seventh lords—so naturally he will give their results. Budha is also conjoined with Sūrya, the lord of the eighth *bhāva,* from the eighth *bhāva;* and although highly powerful in the *navāṁśa,* Budha is himself the second lord, is associated with Rāhu, and is aspected by the eighth lord, Guru. Therefore Budha's intensely strong influence seems to bode Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's passing away.

Budha is also the *ātma-kāraka*, which is favorable, but in *ṣaḍ-balas* Budha is the weakest planet. That in Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's case Budha will cause demise is further strongly supported by an *āyurdāya* method for calculating longevity, according to which Budha is the *pātakī-cakra-daṇḍapati.* Normally *pātakī-cakra* (also known as *śiśu-pātakī-cakra*) is utilized for determining the longevity of children, but if the subject does not die in childhood, then at the time of death the *graha* who governs this *pātakī-cakra* will be ruling as either *mahā-*

daśā lord or *bhukti* lord. In this case Budha's influence at that particular time was heavily imbued with death-inflicting potency, and therefore Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī departed the world during that period.

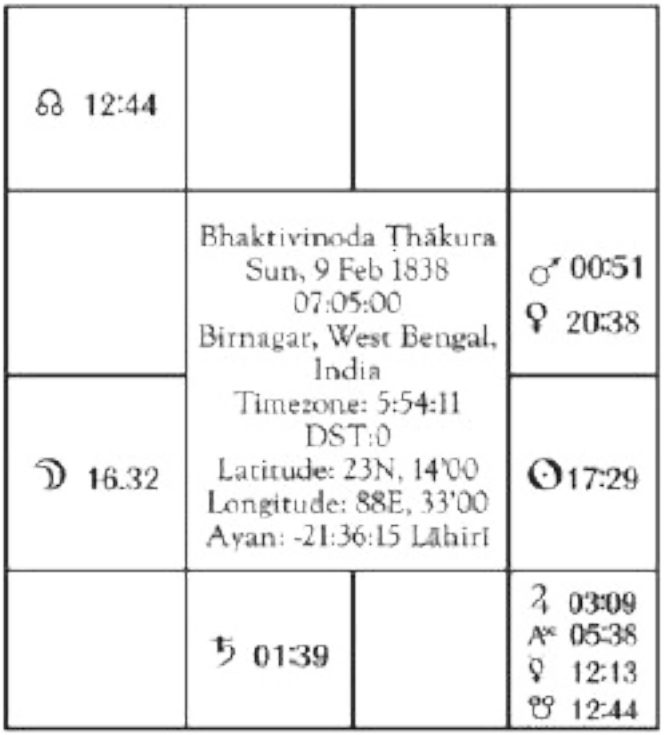
Since Śani is often associated with death, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's passing might have been more expected within his Śani period, yet in this *āyurdāya* chart, Śani, as the lord of the eighth *bhāva,* is influential and favorable, whereas Budha is weaker. Nevertheless, in one sense Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura did indeed depart at the beginning of his Śani period, for that is when he took *sannyāsa,* which is considered civil suicide. According to the system known as *aṁśa-āyurdāya,* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's expected longevity was approximately forty-three years and six months. Although Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura formally accepted *sannyāsa* when just over forty-four years and one month old, one may consider that his decision to do so—which may be considered equivalent to actually doing so—was likely made some, possibly seven, months earlier.

Other systems of *āyurdāya* give Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura a life span of between seventy-seven and eighty-five years. But those calculations merely indicate certain potentialities, which (as is the case for various aspects of *jyotiṣa*) must be considered in conjunction with other, mitigating factors.

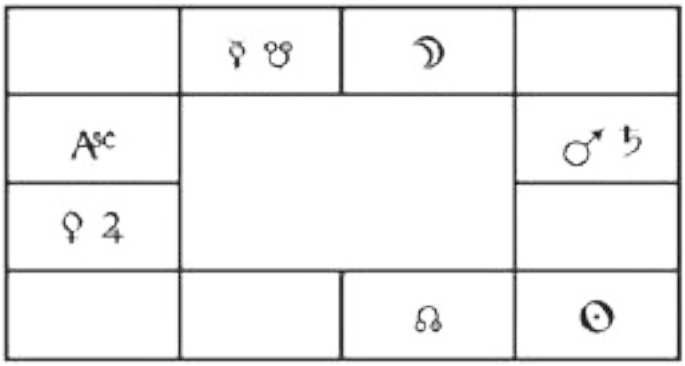
Continuity

Although Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was misconceived by some persons to have acted whimsically, without caring for or following any authority, factually he was totally subservient and dedicated to the cause of his previous gurus. Although Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī's horoscope is unknown, that of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda show continuity with Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's chart has Kanyā rising, which conjoins Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's Candra and Guru, and has Candra in Makara, where Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī has many *grahas.* This correlation also extends to the next generation, for the horoscope of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda also shows activation of Makara and Kanyā, as well as Vṛṣa-*rāśi* (Taurus), which is trine to both of these *rāśis.* From the astrological perspective, this symmetry indicates a powerful bond between these three spiritual titans.

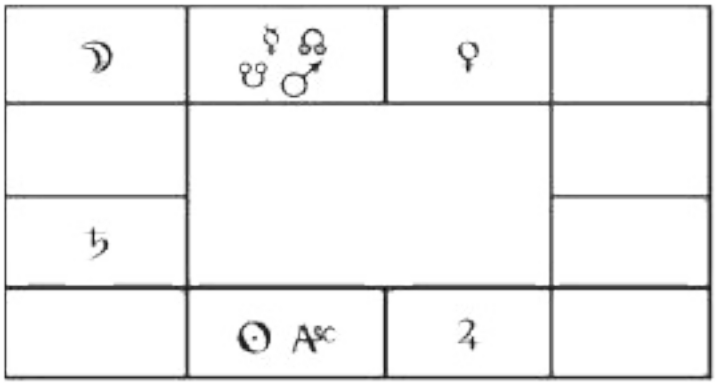
Birth Chart of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura



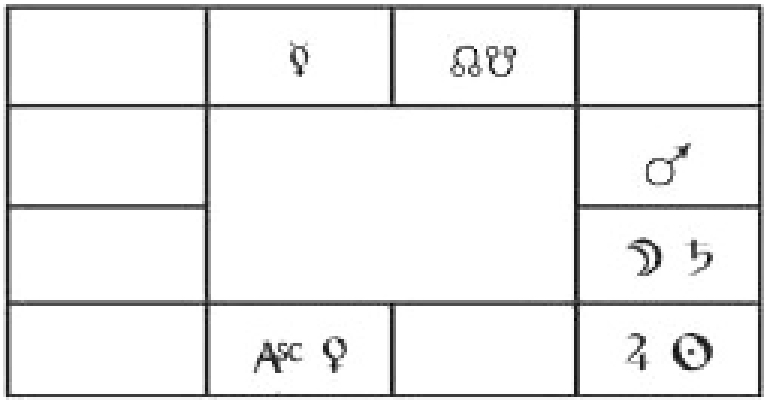
Navāṁśa



Viṁśāṁśa



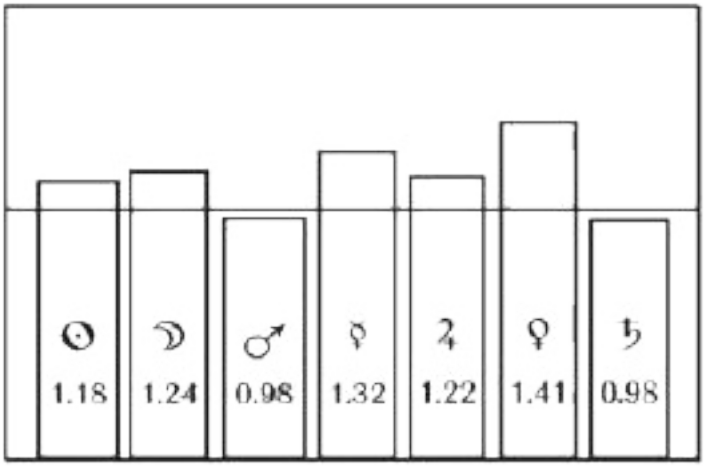
Cātur-viṁśāṁśa



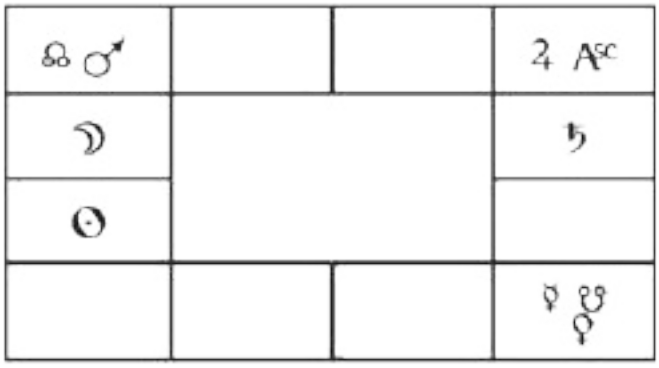
Viṁśottarī

☽	5 Oct 1833	17:50
♂	6 Oct 1843	03:58
☊	5 Oct 1850	20:39
♃	5 Oct 1868	05:17
♄	5 Oct 1884	02:17
☿	6 Oct 1903	16:43
♉	5 Oct 1920	19:32
♀	6 Oct 1927	12:13
☉	6 Oct 1947	08:28
☽	5 Oct 1953	19:20

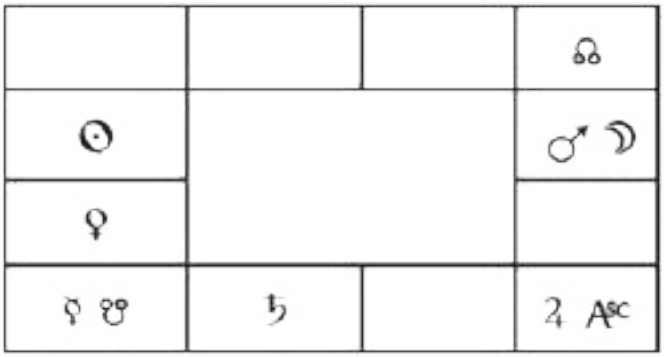
Ṣaḍ-bala



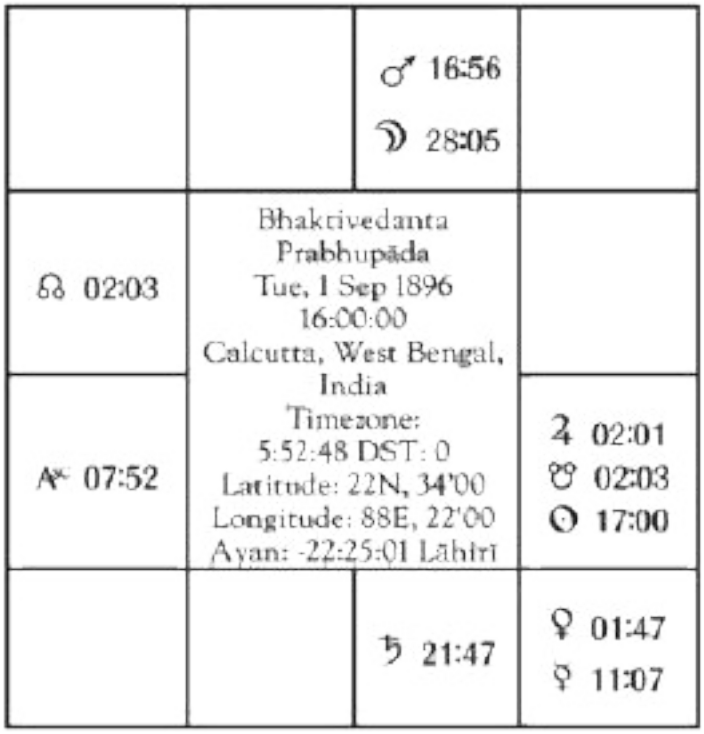
Daśāṁśa



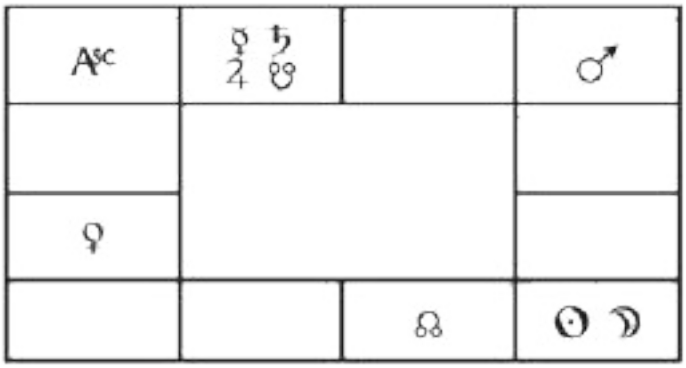
Caturthāṁśa



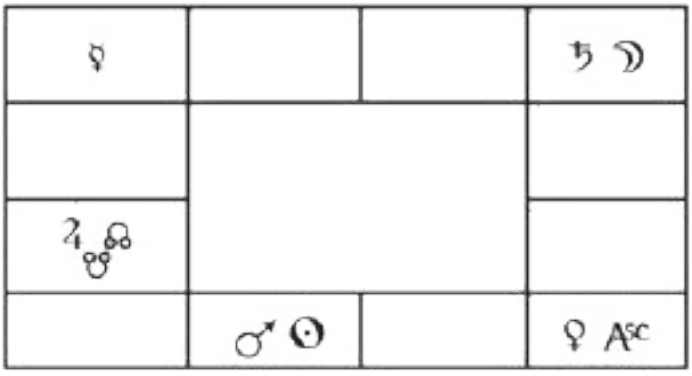
Birth Chart of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda



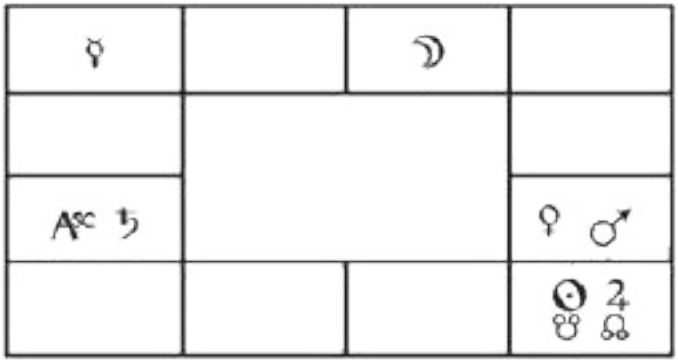
Navāṁśa



Viṁśāṁśa



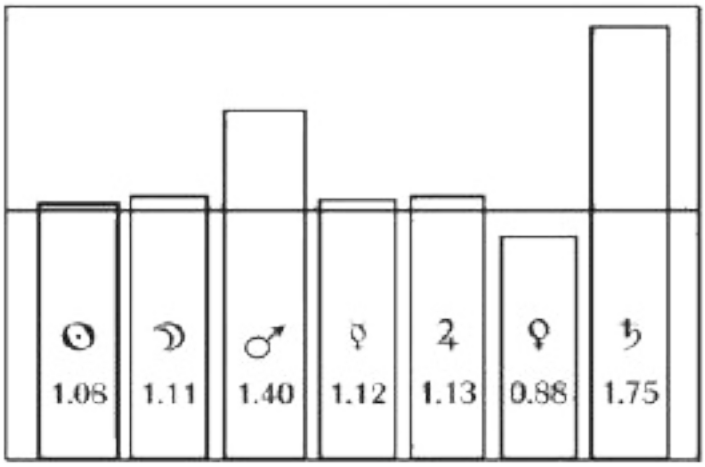
Cātur-viṁśāṁśa



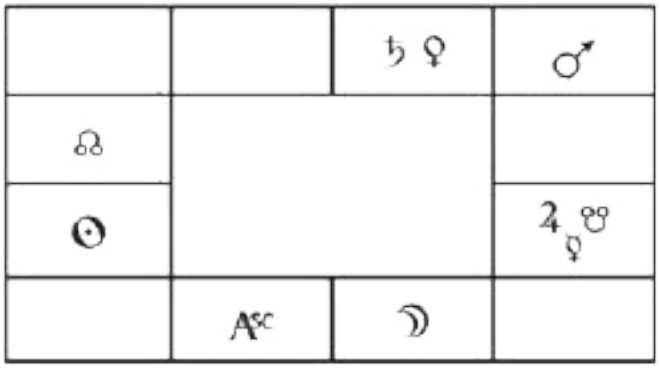
Viṁśottarī

♂	3 Mar 1894	14:08
☊	4 Mar 1901	06:49
♃	4 Mar 1919	15:27
♄	4 Mar 1935	12:27
☿	4 Mar 1954	02:53
♉	4 Mar 1971	05:42
♀	3 Mar 1978	22:23
☉	3 Mar 1998	18:38
☽	3 Mar 2004	05:30
♂	3 Mar 2014	15:38

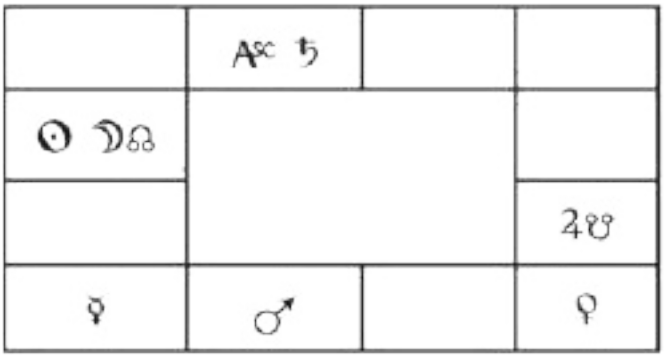
Ṣaḍ-bala



Daśāṁśa



Caturthāṁśa



Astrological Terms

Antardaśā—within a *bhukti,* a shorter period during which a particular *graha's* influence becomes somewhat influential, or, if the predominating *graha* of the *bhukti* is the same as that of the *mahā-daśā* or *bhukti,* the influence of either the primary or secondary *graha* becomes bolstered.

Aspect—(Sanskrit: *dṛṣti*) a *graha's* influence over other *grahas* or over other *rāśis* or *bhāvas* besides the one it is directly associated with.

Āyurdāya—a generic term for the systems used to calculate longevity.

Bhāva—"house," one of twelve segments of a horoscope. The *rāśi* that rules the *lagna* is the first house, the next (in the order given below) is the second house, and so on. Each comprises an extensive portfolio, summarized thus: 1—the subject himself; 2—wealth; 3—younger siblings; 4—mother and home; 5—education and children; 6—disease and enemies; 7—spouse or partner; 8—death; 9—father and guru; 10—career; 11—older siblings and wealth; 12—loss and confinement.

Bhukti—a sub-period within a *mahā-daśā,* in which a particular *graha's* influence becomes secondarily influential.

Graha—"that which seizes (or influences the destinies of men in a supernatural manner)." While most *grahas* are planets, not all planets have divinatory significance. The ten major *grahas* are: the *lagna,* Sūrya, Candra, Maṅgala, Budha, Guru, Śukra, Śani, Rāhu (the north node of Moon) and Ketu (the south node of Moon). The *lagna,* Rāhu, and Ketu are not *lokas* (planets) but mathematical points calculated by the astrologer. Each *graha* represents specific *kārakas* and governs a portfolio of topics. For example, Sūrya is the *ātma-kāraka,* which affects the soul as well as the father, the king, or any ruling authority; in addition to other items, Sūrya's portfolio includes fire, copper, ruby, (the color) copper-red, thorny trees, *sattva-guṇa,* summer, ginger, pungent flavor, the eastern direction, males in general but especially middle-aged men, and *kṣatriyas.* In Vedic astrology there are also numerous *upa-*(minor) *grahas.*

Kāraka—a significator or archetype.

Lagna—the ascendant, the *rāśi* rising on the Eastern horizon at the time in question.

Mahā-daśā—(1) a major period of astrological influence, in which a particular *graha's* influence becomes marked; (2) a system of prognosis that focuses on particular periods in a subject's life.

Rāśi—a sign of the zodiac. Each indicates archetypal energy patterns, as well as a portfolio of related phenomena that are liable to be influenced by the *grahas.*

Ṣaḍ-bala—the six varieties of strength that accrue to a *graha* according to (1) position (*sthāna-bala*), (2) direction (*dig-bala*), (3) time (*kāla-bala*), (4) retrogression (*ceṣṭā-bala*), (5) its inherent strength (*naisargika-bala*), and (6) aspects of other planets (*dṛk-bala*). (*Ṣaṭ*—six; *bala*—strength)

Stellium—a group of *grahas* in a *rāśi.*

Sthāna—*(in astrological context)* abode.

Varga-cakra—(classified as V1, V2, etc.) supplementary indicators that provide detailed information about specific aspects of the *bhāva.* V1, the natal chart, is the reference point for all other *varga-cakras.* Other important *varga-cakras* include V10, *daśāṁśa,* for career, status, and honor, and V20, *viṁśāṁśa,* for *upāsanā* (religiousness and spirituality).

Yoga—a particular combination of planets, signs, and houses.

Names of Grahas and Their English Equivalents

Sūrya—Sun

Candra—Moon

Maṅgala—Mars

Budha—Mercury

Guru—Jupiter

Śukra—Venus

Śani—Saturn

Rāhu—the north node of Moon

Ketu—the south node of Moon

Names of Signs and Their English Equivalents

Meṣa—Aries

Vṛṣabha—Taurus

Mithuna—Gemini

Karkaṭa—Cancer

Siṁha—Leo

Kanyā—Virgo

Tulā—Libra

Vṛścika—Scorpio

Dhanuś—Sagittarius

Makara—Capricorn

Kumbha—Aquarius

Mīna—Pisces

APPENDIX TWO

Writings and Publications

The following list is based on one that appeared in Gauḍīya *15.23–24.41–44. Although the content is extensive, the word* katipaya *(some) used therein suggests that it is incomplete. Published works are listed in approximate chronological order.*

Books

Original Books and Booklets

Prahlāda-caritra [five chapters, Bengali verse, 1886]

Baṅge Sāmājikatā (Bengali social customs) [1900]

Brāhmaṇa o Vaiṣṇavera Tāratamya-viṣayaka Siddhānta (Conclusion concerning the comparison of *brāhmaṇas* and Vaiṣṇavas) [1911; revised and enlarged in 1934]

Navadvīpa-pañjikā [pocket edition; ed., 1914]

Vaiṣṇava-mañjuṣā-samāhṛti [encyclopedia material in four volumes, 1922]

Rai Ramananda [English, 1932]

Relative Worlds [1932]

A Few Words on Vedanta [1932]

The Vedanta: Its Morphology and Ontology [1932]

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī also wrote several poems.[*]

On Jyotiṣa

Published from 1896 onward

Sūrya-siddhānta, with translation[†]

Bhāskarācārya's *Siddhānta-śiromaṇi Golādhyāya Vāsanābhāṣya,* with translation and explanation

Ravi-candra-sāyana-spaṣṭa, with Western mathematical calculations

Laghu-jātaka, with translation and Bhaṭṭotpala's annotation

Laghu-parāśarīya or *Uḍūdaya-pradīpa,* with Bhairava Datta's annotation, and with translation and commentary

Jyotiṣa-tattva, by Raghunandana Bhaṭṭācārya, with translation

Bhauma-siddhānta, with Western mathematical calculations

Ārya-siddhānta, by Āryabhaṭṭa

(Published serially in the magazines *Bṛhaspati* and *Jyotirvid*) *Bhaṭṭa-dīpikā-ṭīkā, Dina-kaumudī, Camatkāra-cintāmaṇi,* and *Jyotiṣa-tattva-saṁhitā,* by Paramādīśvara

Classical Works Published with New Commentaries

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, with *Amṛta-pravāha-bhāṣya* by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and *Anubhāṣya*

Upadeśāmṛta, by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, with translation and *Anuvṛtti*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, with *Gaura-kiśora-anvaya, Svānanda-kuñjānuvāda, Madhva-bhāṣya, Sārārtha-darśinī* commentary by Viśvanātha Cakravartī, *Ananta-gopāla-tathya,* and *Sindhu-vaibhava-vivṛti*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata, by Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura, with *Gauḍīya-bhāṣya*

Bhakti-sandarbha, by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, with Bengali translation and *Gauḍīya-bhāṣya* (published in full, but with commentary on the initial portion only)

Prameya-ratnāvalī, by Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, with *Gauḍīya-bhāṣya*

Śrī Caitanya-candrāmṛta and *Śrī Navadvīpa-śataka,* both by Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, with translation and *Gauḍīya-bhāṣya*[*]

Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā, chapter five, with translation and with commentary of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī (Bengali and English editions)

Classical Works Published without Commentary

Śrī Caitanyopaniṣat

Prema-vivarta, by Jagadānanda Paṇḍita

Īśopaniṣat

Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā and *Saṁskāra-dīpikā*

Unfinished Works

Books prepared or edited by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and being readied for publication at the time of his departure:

Bhakti-ratnākara

Vaiṣṇava-mañjuṣā-samāhṛti [pending volume]

Anubhāṣyam, by Madhvācārya [commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*]

Sarasvatī-jayaśrī, Śrī-parva

Books Edited and Published by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

Prominent Works of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī is stated to have edited and published more than thirty books by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, prominent among which are the following:

Bhajana-rahasya

Arcana-paddhati

Arcana-kaṇa

Jaiva Dharma

Śrī Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta [English, Telugu]

Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma-māhātmya

Tattva-muktāvalī

Tattva-viveka

Tattva-sūtra [in Devanāgarī script]

Hari-nāma-cintāmaṇi

Life and Precepts of Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu[*]

The Bhagavat: Its Philosophy and Theology

Śaraṇāgati [English, Tamil]

Kalyāṇa-kalpataru [Oriya type]

Gītāvalī [Oriya type], *Gītā-mālā*

Sanmodana-bhāṣya [commentary on *Śikṣāṣṭaka*]

Also: *Amṛta-pravāha-bhāṣya* and *Rasika-rañjana* commentaries (listed elsewhere)

Other

Gaura-kṛṣṇodaya, by Govinda dāsa

Bhagavad-gītā, with translation and with commentary by Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa

Bhagavad-gītā, with *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī-tīkā* by Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī and *Rasika-rañjana* translation-cum-commentary by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

Vedānta-tattva-sāra, by Rāmānujācārya, with translation

Maṇi-mañjarī, by Madhvācārya, with translation

Sadācāra-smṛti, by Madhvācārya, with translation

Hari-nāmāmṛta-vyākaraṇa, by Jīva Gosvāmī

Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala, by Locana dāsa Ṭhākura

Hari-bhakti-kalpa-latikā, with translation [author unknown]

Envisaged Projects

Publication projects conceived by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura but not undertaken before his departure:

Āmnāya-sūtra, by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, with added commentary

Bhāgavad-ārka-marīci-mālā, by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura (a new edition, with *anvaya,* translation, and appendix)

Bhagavad-gītā, with the commentaries of Rāmānujācārya and Śrīdhara Svāmī and added explanation

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu-vivṛti (A commentary on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*)

Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta, by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

Hari-bhakti-vilāsa-sāra (The essence of *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*)

Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta, translated by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, with the gloss of Śivānanda Sena's son Caitanya dāsa, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī's *Sāraṅga-raṅgadā* commentary, and *anvaya*

Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā, by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, with added Sanskrit commentary

Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta, by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

Madhva-vijaya, by Nārāyaṇācārya, with *anvaya* and translation

Mahābhārata, with the *Lakṣābharaṇa* (or *Lakṣālaṅkāra*) gloss of Vādirāja

Mahābhārata-tātparya-nirṇaya and other books by Madhvācārya, with translations

Padyāvalī, an anthology of verses compiled by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

Pāramārthika Bhārata (Spiritual India)

Prārthanā, and commentary on *Prema-bhakti-candrikā*

Sarva-saṁvādinī, by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī

Ṣaṭ-sandarbha, by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Tenth Canto, with added glosses of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, and Śrīla Vijayadhvaja Tīrtha and a new commentary by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

Stava-mālā, poems by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, with translation and *anvaya*

Stavāvalī, poems by Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, with translation and *anvaya*

Sva-niyama-dvādaśakam, by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

Vaiṣṇava-mañjuṣā

Vaiṣṇava-smṛti-kalpa-druma (Desire tree of Vaiṣṇava teachings) or *Aṣṭottaraśata-tattva* (One hundred and eight philosophical categories)

Vedānta-kalpa-druma (Desire tree of Vedānta)

Vedānta-syamantaka and *Siddhānta-ratna* (or *Bhāṣya-pīṭhaka*), by Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa

Yukti-mallikā, remaining four chapters, with translation [the first chapter had been published]

Some of the main *Upaniṣads,* with commentaries by Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* and with a new Gauḍīya commentary

All the works of the Gauḍīya *ācāryas,* at least in original form (i.e., without translation if in

Sanskrit, and without commentaries)

An encyclopedia of both secular and spiritual topics, intended to be the most detailed and authoritative in the world and presented in the light of Gauḍīya *siddhānta.*

Hints on the Study of Bhagavatam [English]

Sree Rupa Goswami [English]

Articles

Numerous original essays written by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura appeared in *Sajjana-toṣaṇī,* the *Gauḍīya, Nadia Prakash,* and the *Harmonist,* many of which are listed below. When applicable, an English translation of the title is also included within parentheses. Articles indicated as biographical describe the person whose name forms the title of the cited essay. Not listed here are the many redacted lectures that appeared in the *Gauḍīya* under generic titles (such as *Śrīla Prabhupādera Hari-kathā*), selections from his letters, and short pieces, such as *Sāmayika Prasaṅga* (Description of current topics), that were ascribed to him.

Sajjana-toṣaṇī

1897

Sanskrit Bhaktamāla [review of the Sanskrit translation of *Bhaktamāla,* a book composed in Brij-*bhāṣā*]

1899

Śrīman Nāthamuni [biographical]

Yāmunācārya [biographical]

Śrī Rāmānujācārya [biographical]

1915–16

Pūrva Bhāṣā (Introductory words)

Prāṇīra Prati Dayā (Compassion toward living beings)

Śrī Madhvamuni-carita [biographical, concerning Śrī Madhvācārya]

Ṭhākurer Smṛti-samiti (About the Bhaktivinoda Memorial Committee)

Divyasūri vā Ālvār [about ancient saints of the Śrī *sampradāya*]

Jayatīrtha [biographical]

Godādevī [biographical]

Pāñcarātrika Adhikāra (Eligibility according to the *pāñcarātrika* system)

Prāpti Svīkāra (Acknowledgement of receipt) [as in writings sent by post to an editor]

Vaiṣṇava Smṛti (Scriptural regulations for Vaiṣṇavas)

Śrī Patrikāra Kathā (The message of the holy magazine)

Bhaktāṅghri-reṇu [biographical]

Kulaśekhara [biographical]

Sāmayik Prasaṅga (Current topics)

Śrī Gaurāṅga [philosophical topics concerning Śrī Gaurāṅga]

Abhakti-mārga (The path of nondevotion)

Viṣṇucitta [biographical]

Pratikūla Matavāda (Contrary theory)

Mahātmā Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa [biographical, about Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī, the servant of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura]

Toṣaṇīra Kathā (The message of *Sajjana-toṣaṇī*)

Śrī Guru Svarūpa (The identity of the guru)

Prabodhānanda [about Śrī Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī]

Śrī Bhakti-mārga (The path of devotion)

Samālocanā (Critical review)

Toṣaṇī-prasaṅga (About *Sajjana-toṣaṇī*)

Artha o Anartha (Meaning and non-meaning)

Baddha, Taṭasthā o Mukta (Bound, on the border, and free)*

Gohite Pūrvādeśa (Previous edicts concerning cow protection)

Prākṛta o Aprākṛta (Material and nonmaterial)

Antardvīpa [about Antardvīpa, part of Navadvīpa-*dhāma*]

Prakaṭa-pūrṇimā (The full-moon night of Lord Caitanya's appearance)

Caitanyābda (The calendar calculated from the date of Lord Caitanya's appearance)

Upakurvāṇa [*brahmacarya* undertaken with the intention or option of later marrying]

Varṣa-śeṣa (Year end)

1916–17

Nava-varṣa (New Year)

Āsaner Kathā (The message of Bhaktivinoda Āsana)

Ācārya-santāna (Descendants of *ācārya*s)

Videśe Gaura-kathā (Lord Caitanya's message in foreign countries)

Samālocanā (Critical review)

Āmāra Prabhura Kathā (Topics about my master) [about Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī]

Vaiṣṇavera Viṣaya (A devotee's sense object)

Guru-svarūpe Punaḥ Praśna (Another question about the identity of a guru)

Vaiṣṇava-vaṁśa (Vaiṣṇava dynasty)

Viraha-mahotsava (A festival of separation)

Śrī Patrikāra Ukti (Statements in the holy magazine)

Prākṛta-rasa-śata-dūṣiṇī (A hundred refutations of mundane mellows)

Duiṭi Ullekha (Two words)

Gānera Adhikārī Ke? (Who is eligible to sing?)

Sadācāra (Scripturally ordained behavior)

Amāyā (Non-dissemblance)

Prārthanā-rasa-vivṛti (Explanation of the mellows of *Prārthanā*)*

Pratibandhaka (Obstacle)

Bhāi Sahajiyā (Brother *sahajiyā*)

Varṣa-śeṣa (Year end)

1917–18

Nava-varṣa (New Year)

Samālocanā (Critical review)

Sajjana—Kṛpālu (A devotee is merciful)[‡]

Śakti-pariṇata Jagat (The material world as a transformation of the Lord's energy)

Sajjana—Akṛta-droha (A devotee is inoffensive)

Sajjana—Satya-sāra (A devotee is truthful)

Prākṛta Śūdra Vaiṣṇava Nahe (A person with the nature of a *śūdra* cannot be a Vaiṣṇava)

Nāgarī-māṅgalya (Conferring auspiciousness upon the *gaura-nāgarīs*) [poem]

Sajjana—Sama (A devotee is equally disposed to all)

Sajjana—Nirdoṣa (A devotee is faultless)

Sajjana—Vadānya (A devotee is magnanimous)

Bhāḍaṭiyā Bhakta Nahe (A hired person is not a devotee)

Sajjana—Mṛdu (A devotee is gentle)

Sajjana—Akiñcana (A devotee is without material possessions)

Sajjana—Śuci (A devotee is pure)

Vaiṣṇava Darśana (Vaiṣṇava philosophy)

Varṣa-śeṣa (Year end)

1918–19

Nava-varṣa (New Year)

Sajjana—Sarvopakāraka (A devotee is a benefactor to all)

Sajjana—Śānta (A devotee is peaceful)

Gaura Ki Vastu? (What kind of phenomenon is Gaura?)

Sajjana—Kṛṣṇaika-śaraṇa (A devotee takes shelter only of Kṛṣṇa)

Sajjana—Akāma (A devotee is desireless)

Sajjana—Nirīha (A devotee is aloof from ordinary worldly affairs)

Sajjana—Sthira (A devotee is fixed)

Sajjana—Vijita-ṣaḍ-guṇa (A devotee conquers the six pushes)*

Śrī-mūrti o Māyāvāda (The worshipable form of the Lord and the doctrine of Māyāvāda)

Śrī Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā [about the organization so named]

Sajjana—Mita-bhuk (A devotee accepts sense objects in moderation)

Bhaktisiddhānta (The philosophical conclusion of the devotional path)

Sajjana—Apramatta (A devotee is sane)

1919–20

Varṣodghāta (Bringing in the new year)

Sajjana—Mānada (A devotee offers respect to others)

Sajjana—Amānī (A devotee does not desire to be honored)

Sajjana—Gambhīra (A devotee is grave)

Sajjana—Karuṇa (A devotee is compassionate)

Sajjana—Maitra (A devotee is a friend to all)

Kāla-saṁjñāya Nāma (Names for the divisions of time)

Śaukra o Vṛttagata Varṇa-bheda (Divisions of social orders according to birth and occupation)

Karmīra Kanakādi (The wealth and other assets of fruitive workers)

Guru-dāsa (The servant of a guru)

Dīkṣita (The initiated)

1920–21

Hāyanodghāta (Bringing in the new year)

Aikāntika o Vyabhicāra (Exclusive devotee and licentiousness)

Nirjane Anartha (The faults of solitary worship) [the poem beginning *duṣṭa mana! tumi kisera vaiṣṇava?*]

Sajjana—Kavi (A devotee is a poet)

Cātur-māsya

Pañcopāsanā (The system of worshiping five gods)

Vaiṣṇavera Smṛti (Scripture that delineates regulations for Vaiṣṇavas)

Saṁskāra-sandarbha (An essay on sacraments)

Sajjana—Dakṣa (A devotee is expert)

Vaiṣṇava-maryādā (Vaiṣṇava etiquette)

Sajjana—Maunī (A devotee is silent)

Yogapīṭhe Śrī-mūrti-sevā (Deity worship at the Yogapīṭha)

Aprākṛta (Nonmaterial)

1921–22

Nava-varṣa (New Year)

Saviśeṣa o Nirviśeṣa ([concept of the absolute as being both] With and without attributes)

Meki o Āsal (Bogus and genuine)

Smārta Raghunandana [about the *smārta* authority Raghunandana]

Hari-nāma Mahā-mantra (The great mantra of the name of Hari)

Mantropāsanā (Worship by mantra)

Niṣiddhācāra (Forbidden activities)

Śikṣāṣṭakera-laghu-vivaraṇa (A brief description of *Śikṣāṣṭaka*)

Gauḍīya

First Year (1922–23)

Śrī-kṛṣṇa-janma (Lord Kṛṣṇa's birth)

Madhura Lipi (Sweet writing)

Loka-vicāra (Public opinion)

Paramārtha (The highest goal of life)

Purāṇa-saṁvāda (The message of the *Purāṇas*)

Nīti-bheda (Differences in ethics)

Ruci-bheda (Differences in taste)

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī [biographical]

Gauḍīye Prīti (Affection for the *Gauḍīya* magazine)

Durgā-pūjā (Worship of Durgā)

Śāradīyā Vāhana (Durgā's carrier)

Je Dike Bātās (Whichever way the wind)

Mārute Secana (Sprinkled by the wind)

Smārtera Kāṇḍa (The section of Vedic literature dealing with *smārta* rites)

Vicāra-ādālata (Court of judgment)

Sevāpara Nāma (The name as uttered by one devoted to service)

Tridaṇḍi Bhikṣu Gīti (The song of the *tridaṇḍi-sannyāsī*)

Śrī Madhva-janma-tithi (The appearance day of Śrī Madhvācārya)

Varṇāśrama

Aprakaṭa-tithi (Disappearance day)

Vraje Vānara (Monkeys in Vraja)

Cyuta-gotra (A fallen lineage)

Nṛmātrādhikāra (The right of every human)

Bhṛtaka-śrotā (A hired audience)

Vaiṣṇava o Abhṛtaka (A Vaiṣṇava and one not hired)

Dīkṣā-vidhāna (The process of initiation)

Āsurika Pravṛtti (Ungodly tendency)

Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa [biographical]

Sadācāra-smṛti [discussion of *Sadācāra-smṛti,* by Madhvācārya]

Pañcarātra [discussion of topics concerning *Pañcarātra*]

Nigama o Āgama (Vedic and related scriptures)

Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī [biographical]

Vaiṣṇava Darśana (Vaiṣṇava philosophy)

Varṇāntara (Changing caste)

Paricaye Praśna (A question about identity)

Asatye Ādara (Respect for untruth)

Ayogya Santāna (Unworthy offspring)

Aśūdra Dīkṣā (Initiation for non-*śūdras*)

Pūjādhikāra (Eligibility to perform *pūjā*)

Anātma-jṅāna (Lack of knowledge of the self)

Nija-paricaya (One's own identity)

Vaṁśa-praṇālī (Dynastic discipular lineages)

Gaura-bhajana (Worship of Gaura)

Dhānyā o Śyāmā (Cultivated rice and weeds resembling rice)

Tṛtīya Janma (Third birth)

Avaidha Sādhana (Illegitimate practice)

Baija-brāhmaṇa (Seminal *brāhmaṇa*)

Pracāre Bhrānti (Mistakes in preaching)

Bhāgavata-śravaṇa (Hearing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*)

Maṭha Ki? (What is a *maṭha*?)

Āche Adhikāra (There is eligibility)

Śrīdhara Svāmī [biographical]

Vyavahāra (Manners and customs)

Kaminā (Ignobility)

Śakti-sañcāra (Empowerment)

Varṣa-parīkṣā (Annual examination)

Eka Jāti (One caste)

Ihaloka Paraloka (This world and the next)

Second Year (1923–24)

Varṣa-praveśa (Entering the new year)

Brahmaṇya-deva (The Lord of the *brāhmaṇas*)

Guru-bruva (So-called spiritual masters)

Kīrtane Vijñāna (Science in *kīrtana*)

Āvirbhāva-tithi (Appearance day [of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura])

Maṭhera Utsava ([Gauḍīya] Maṭha festivals)

Dīkṣita (The initiated)*

Gosvāmī-pāda (Honorable *gosvāmī*)

Kṛṣṇe Bhoga-buddhi (The mentality of enjoying Kṛṣṇa)

Gauḍīya Bhajana-praṇālī (Gauḍīya spiritual practices)

Śrī-vigraha (The deity form)

Jabālā-kathā (Discussion of Jabālā)

Brāhmaṇa o Vaiṣṇava (*Brāhmaṇas* and Vaiṣṇavas)

Prakṛta Bhoktā Ke? (Who is the real enjoyer?)

Gauḍīyera Veṣa (Gauḍīya apparel)

Pratisambhāṣana (Speech in reply [to speeches of praise])

Sūtra-vidveṣa (Enmity toward the thread [i.e., toward the Gauḍīya Maṭha practice of awarding the sacred thread regardless of caste])

Third Year (1924–25)

Gauḍīya Hāspātāla (The Gauḍīya hospital)

Bhāgavata-vivṛti (Explanation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*)

Śrī Kulaśekhara [biographical]

Meyeli Hinduwānī (Effeminate Hinduism)

Fourth Year (1925–26)

Madhura Lipi (Sweet writing)

Aśrauta-darśana (Non-Vedic philosophy)

Vedānta-tattva-sārer Upodghāta (Introduction to the *Vedānta-tattva-sāra*)

Fifth Year (1926–27)

Darśane Bhrānti (Philosophical error)

Vaiṣṇava-śrāddha (Vaiṣṇava obsequies)

Ālocakera Ālocanā (The criticism of the critics)

Nyākābokāra Svarūpa (The nature of a contemptible fool)

Sixth Year (1927–28)

Māna-dāna o Hāni (Offering respect, and loss)

Gauḍapura (The city of Gauḍa)

Āsala o Nakala (Real and counterfeit)

Ahaituka Dhāma-sevaka (A selfless servant of the *dhāma*)

Sarva-pradhāna Vivecanāra Viṣaya (The most important thing to consider)

Bhāi Kutārkika (Brother quibbler)

Kṛṣṇa-bhakta Nirbodha Nahen (A devotee of Kṛṣṇa is not foolish)

Prācīna Kuliyāy Sahara Navadvīpa (The city of Navadvīpa is in old Kuliyā)

Kapaṭatā Daridratāra Mūla (The source of poverty is deceitfulness)

Ekaścandra (One moon)

Puṇyāraṇya (Sacred forest)

Goḍāy Galad (Basic mistake)

Nīlācale Śrīmat Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda (Śrīmad Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda in Purī)

Seventh Year (1928–29)

Virakta Jāghanya Nahe (A renunciant is not contemptible)

Āmi "Ei" Nai, Āmi "Sei" (I am not "this"; I am "that")

Vyavasādārer Kapaṭatā (The merchants' cheating)

Haṁsajātir Itihāsa (History of the swanlike people)

Mantra-saṁskāra (The sacrament of receiving the mantra)

Bhoga o Bhakti (Enjoyment and devotional service)

Sunīti o Durnīti (Good and evil policies)

Kṛṣṇa-tattva (The true position of Kṛṣṇa)

Śrīdhāma-vicāra (Conclusions about the holy *dhāma*)

Ekāyana-śruti o Tad-vidhāna (The *Ekāyana* Veda and its prescriptions)

Pratīcye Kārṣṇa Sampradāya (The school of devotion to Kṛṣṇa in the West)

Pañcarātra [discussion of topics concerning *Pañcarātra*]

Nīlācale Śrīmad Bhaktivinoda (Śrīmad Bhaktivinoda in Purī)

Tīrtha Pāṇḍarapura (The holy place Pāṇḍarapura)

Māṇikya Bhāskara [praise of the King of Tripura]

Vaiṣṇava-smṛti (Scriptures giving rules of Vaiṣṇava behavior)

Mahānta Guru-tattva (The principle of the guru as an exalted Vaiṣṇava)

Boṣṭam Pārlāmeṇṭ (The parliament of Vaiṣṇavas)

Sumedhā-tithi (The day observed by intelligent persons) [about the disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura]

Eighth Year (1929–30)

Śrīdhāma Māyāpur Kothāy? (Where is Śrīdhāma Māyāpur?)

Gauḍācale Śrī Bhaktivinoda (Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in Bengal)

Sātvata o Asātvata (Devotees of Kṛṣṇa and nondevotees)

Bhārata o Paramārtha (India and the supreme goal of life)

Paramārthera Svarūpa (The nature of the supreme goal of life)

Prācīna Kuliyāya Dvārabhet (Charging admission to temples in Navadvīpa)

Śikṣaka o Śikṣita (The teacher and the taught)

Viṣayīra Kṛṣṇa-prema (The materialists' love of Kṛṣṇa)

Āśramera Veṣa (Apparel for different stages of life)

Ninth Year (1930–31)

Śrī-bhakti-mārga (The holy path of devotion)

Bhava-rogīra Hāsapātāla (A hospital for those with the disease of material life)

Jagabandhura Kṛṣṇānuśīlana (Jagabandhu Prabhu's cultivation of Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti*)

Tenth Year (1931–32)

Gauḍīya Mahimā (In praise of the *Gauḍīya* magazine)

Sat-śikṣārthīra Vivecya (What a student of truth should consider)

Nimba-bhāskara [biographical, describing Nimbārkācārya]

Ajña o Vijñera Narma-kathā (Joking talks between a fool and a wise man)

Vaiṣṇava-vaṁśa (Vaiṣṇava dynasty)

Kanphucor Vicāra (The philosophy of Confucius)

Eleventh Year (1932–33)

Ekādaśa Prārambhikā (Entering the eleventh year of the *Gauḍīya*)

Vaiṣṇave Jāti-buddhi (Considering a Vaiṣṇava to belong to a particular caste)

Mādhukara Bhaikṣya (What should be solicited in door-to-door begging)

Duṣṭi-vaiklavya (Distress from wrongdoing)

Āmāra Kathā (My message)

Sat-śikṣā Pradarśanī (The spiritual education exhibition)

Kṛṣṇa Bhakti-i Śoka-kāma-jāḍyāpahā (Devotion to Kṛṣṇa is the only way to get rid of lamentation, desire, and lethargy)

Krṣṇe Matir Astu (May your inclination be toward Kṛṣṇa)

Twelfth Year (1933–34)

Kṛpāśīrvāda (Merciful blessings)

Thirteenth Year (1934–35)

Sva-para-maṅgala (Auspiciousness for oneself and others)

Vaikuṇṭha o Guṇa-Jāta Jagat (The spiritual world, and the universe produced from nature's modes)

Bhogavāda o Bhakti (Hedonism and devotion)

Fourteenth Year (1935–36)

Nava-varṣa (New Year)

'Baḍa Āmi' *o 'Bhālo Āmi'* ('Big I' and 'good I')

Tadvana (That forest)[*]

Vāstava-vastu (The real entity)

Fifteenth Year (1936–37)

Hāyanodghāta (Bringing in the new year)

Original articles attributed to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī that appeared in editions of the *Gauḍīya* after his disappearance

Fifteenth Year (1936–37)

Śrī Guru Pāda-padma-i Aśoka-abhaya-amṛta-ādhāra (The lotus feet of the guru are certainly the reservoir of sorrowless-ness, fearlessness, and immortality)

Tri-vidha Adhikāra (Three kinds of eligibility)

Pāramārthika Sāmayika-patrera Ādarśa o Nīti (The ideal and principle of a spiritual periodical)

Sixteenth Year (1937–38)

Ālo o Kālo (Light and black)

Śrī Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī Prabhu [laudatory][†]

Seventeenth Year (1938–39)

Adhirovāde Guru Grahaṇa (Accepting a guru by the philosophy of overstepping)

Eighteenth Year (1939–40)

Īśa-vaimukhyera Pariṇāma o Tad-dūrīkaraṇopaya (The result of aversion to Godhead and the means of removing that)

Śrauta Vicāra (The judgment of Vedic authorities)

Prakṛta Mahājana Ke? (Who is a genuine great personality?)

Tri-vidha Adhikārīra Kartavya (Duties of the three kinds of eligible devotees)

Guru Pādāśraya (Shelter at the feet of a guru)

Aikāntika Hari-bhajana (Exclusive devotion)

Śrīmad-Bhāgavata

Vaiṣṇavera Svataḥ-siddha Brāhmaṇatva o Aprākṛtatva (The inherent brahminical status and transcendental position of a devotee)

Nineteenth Year (1940–41)

Śrī Bhāgavata-dharma Śikṣārthi-gaṇera Kartavya (The duty of persons desiring to learn about *bhāgavata-dharma*)

Twenty-first Year (1942–43)

Bhakti-rasa

Śrī Gauḍīya-Āmnāya

APPENDIX THREE

Gauḍīya Maṭha Branches

Some of the following were adjuncts to larger centers; those designated as Maṭhālaya were temporary or minor offices or were sites acquired for future development. Names of deities installed by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura are included where applicable, although names of some deities were unavailable at the time of publication.[*]

Śrī Navadvīpa-maṇḍala

(Name of center/ name of deity; location)

1. Śrī Caitanya Maṭha/ Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga–Vinoda-Prāṇa Jīu, and deities of *ācāryas* Madhva, Viṣṇusvāmī, Nimbārka, and Rāmānuja; Śrīdhāma Māyāpur

2. Śrī Yogapīṭha; Śrīdhāma Māyāpur[‡]

3. Śrī Advaita Bhavan (residence of Śrī Advaita Ācārya); Śrīdhāma Māyāpur

4. Śrīvāsa Aṅgana (residence of Śrī Śrīvāsa Paṇḍiṭa)/ Śrī Gaura-Nityānanda and Śrī Pañca-tattva; Śrīdhāma Māyāpur

5. Anukūla-Kṛṣṇānuśīlanāgāra; Śrīdhāma Māyāpur

6. Śrī Murāri Gupta Pāṭ (residence of Murāri Gupta); Śrīdhāma Māyāpur[‡]

7. Jayadeva Gauḍīya Maṭhālaya (*bhajana-kuṭīra* of Śrīpāda Jayadeva Gosvāmī); Śrīnāthapura

8. Chand Kazi's Samādhi; Śrīdhāma Māyāpur

9. Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja (Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's house, i.e., place of *bhajana,* and his *samādhi,* including a deity of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura); Svarupganj[*]

10. Suvarṇa Vihāra Gauḍīya Maṭha; Godrumadvīpa

11. Gaura-Gadādhara Maṭha/ Śrī Gaura-Gadādhara Jīu; Cāṅpāhāṭi, Ḥṭudvīpa[‡]

12. Sārvabhauma Gauḍīya Maṭhālaya (site of the school where Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya studied); Vidyānagara, Gaṅgānandapura, Jahnudvīpa

13. Modadruma Chatra (place of Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura's appearance)/ Śrī Gaura-Nityānanda; Māmgāchi, Modadrumadvīpa

14. Rudradvīpa Gauḍīya Maṭha/ Śrī Gaurasundara and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda; Rudrapāḍā, Rudradvīpa

Other Places in Bengal

15. Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha/ Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga–Vinoda-Ānanda Jīu; Bāg-bazar, Calcutta

16. Śrī Mādhva Gauḍīya Maṭha/ Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga–Vinoda-Kānta Jīu; Dacca

17. Tetiyā Kuñja-kānān; Krishnanagar

18. Śrī Kuñja-kuṭīra; Krishnanagar

19. Ekāyana Maṭha; Hanskhali, Nadia.

20. Ranaghat Gauḍīya Maṭhāsana; Ranaghat

21. Maheśa Paṇḍiṭa Śrīpāṭa; Cākdāha, Nadia*

22. Puṇḍā Gauḍīya Maṭha; Puṇḍā, 24 Parganas

23. Śrī Gopālajī Maṭha/ Śrī Gopāla Jīu; Kamalāpura, Dacca

24. Śrī Gadāi-Gaurāṅga Maṭha/ Śrī Gadāī-Gaurāṅga; Baliyati, Dacca District

25. Śrī Jagannātha Gauḍīya Maṭha/ Śrī Śrī Gaura-Gadādhara–Vinoda-Vallabha Jīu; Mymensingh

26. Āmalājoḍā Prapannāśrama/ Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga–Vinoda-Kiśora Jīu; Rajabandha, Burdwan*

27. Śrī Bhāgavata-janānanda Maṭha/ Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga–Vinoda-Nātha Jīu; Ciruliya, Midnapore

28. Amarṣi Gauḍīya Maṭha; Midnapore

29. Brahmanpara Prapannāśrama/ Śrī Ṣaḍbhūja Gaurāṅga; Brahmanpara, Maju, Howrah

Śrī Kṣetra-maṇḍala

30. Puruṣottama Maṭha/ Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga, Śrī Gaura-Gadādhara–Vinoda-Mādhava Jīu, Vyāsa, Madhvācārya; Caṭaka Parvata, Purī

31. Bhakti-kuṭī (Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *bhajana-sthalī*); Purī

32. Śrī Brahma Gauḍīya Maṭha/ Śrī Śrī Gauḍīyanātha-Gopī-Gopīnātha Jīu; Ālālanātha

33. Tridaṇḍī Gauḍīya Maṭha/ Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga–Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī; Bhubaneswar

34. Saccidānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha/ Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga–Vinoda-Ramaṇa Jīu; Cuttack

Śrī Vraja-maṇḍala

35. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Maṭha/ Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga–Rādhā-Dāmodara; Vṛṇdāvana

36. Śrī Mathurā Gauḍīya Maṭhālaya; Viśrāma-ghāṭa, Mathurā

37. Varṣāṇā Gauḍīya Maṭhālaya; Varṣāṇā

38. Saṅket Bihārī Maṭha; Varṣāṇā[†]

39. Nandagrāma Gauḍīya Maṭhālaya; Nandagrāma

40. Goṣṭha-bihārī Maṭha/ Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga–Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī; Śeṣaśāyī

41. Śrī Govardhana-kuṭīra; Govardhana

42. Śrī Kuñja-bihārī Maṭha (*puṣpa-samādhi* of Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī)/ Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga–Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī; Rādhā-kuṇḍa

43. Vraja-svānanda-sukhada-kuñja (*puṣpa-samādhi* of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura); Rādhā-kuṇḍa

44. Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa Goṣṭhavāṭī; Rādhā-kuṇḍa

Elsewhere in India

45. Darjeeling Gauḍīya Maṭha/ Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga–Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī; Darjeeling[*]

46. Śrī Caitanya Gauḍīya Maṭha; Dumurkonda, Cirkunda, Manbhum[†]

47. Sarbhog Gauḍīya Maṭha; Chakchaka, Kamrup, Assam[‡]

48. Goalpara Prapannāśrama; Assam

49. Rāmānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha/ Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga–Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī; Kovvur, West Godavari, Andhra Pradesh

50. Madras Gauḍīya Maṭha/ Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga–Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī; Madras, Tamil Nadu

51. Gayā Gauḍīya Maṭha; Gayā, Bihar

52. Patna Gauḍīya Maṭha/ Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga–Vinoda-Govindānanda Jīu; Patna, Bihar

53. Danapur Gauḍīya Maṭhālaya; Bihar

54. Śrī Sanātana Gauḍīya Maṭha/ Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga–Vinoda-Vinoda Jīu; Banaras, Uttar Pradesh[§]

55. Śrī Rūpa Gauḍīya Maṭha/ Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga–Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī; Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh

56. Paramahaṁsa Maṭha/ Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga–Vinoda-Vilāsa Jīu; Nimsar (Naimiṣāraṇya), Uttar Pradesh

57. Śrī Sārasvata Gauḍīya Maṭha; Haridwar, Uttar Pradesh

58. Delhi Gauḍīya Maṭha/ Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga–Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī; New Delhi

59. Śrī Vyāsa Gauḍīya Maṭha/ Śrī Vinoda-Rāma Jīu; Kurukṣetra

60. Balasore Gauḍīya Maṭha Pīṭha; Balasore, Orissa

61. Bombay Gauḍīya Maṭha/ Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga–Vinoda-Vaibhavānanda Jīu; Bombay

Outside India

62. Rangoon Gauḍīya Maṭha; Burma

63. London Gauḍīya Maṭhālaya; United Kingdom

64. Berlin Gauḍīya Maṭhālaya; Germany.

APPENDIX FOUR

Other Accomplishments

Presses Established

Bhāgavata Yantra/Press (Calcutta, Māyāpur, Krishnanagar), 1913–15

Gaudiya Printing Works (Calcutta), 1923

Nadia Prakāśa Yantrālaya (Māyāpur), 1928

Paramarthi Printing Works (Cuttack), 1936

Theistic Exhibitions

(Location—opening date, name)

Kurukṣetra—4 November 1928, Gauḍīya Pradarśanī

Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, Māyāpur—9 February 1930, Śrīdhāma Māyāpur-Navadvīpa Pradarśanī

Bāg-bazar Gauḍīya Maṭha, Calcutta—5 November 1930, Pāramārthika Pradarśanī

Bāg-bazar Gauḍīya Maṭha, Calcutta—6 September 1931, Sat-śikṣā Pradarśanī/ Exhibition of Theistic Education [*]

Dacca—6 January 1933, Sat-śikṣā Pradarśanī

Kurukṣetra—21 August 1933, Gauḍīya Pradarśanī

Patna—10 November 1933, Sat-śikṣā Pradarśanī

Banaras—24 December 1933, Pāramārthika Pradarśanī

Prayāga—(during Ardha Kumbha-melā) 7 January 1936, Sat-śikṣā Pradarśanī

Kurukṣetra—19 June 1936, Sat-śikṣā Pradarśanī

Śrī Caitanya's Footprints Installed

Mandar, 13 October 1929

Kānāi Nāṭaśālā, 15 October 1929

Jajpur, 25 December 1930

Kūrmakṣetra, 26 December 1930

Siṁhācalam, 27 December 1930

Kovvur, 29 December 1930

Maṅgalagiri, 31 December 1930

Chatrabhog, 2 April 1934

Associations Founded

Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā (The universal royal court of Vaiṣṇavas), 1919[*]

Sārasvata Āsana (The seat of Sarasvatī), 1924[†]

Gauḍīya-sampādaka-saṅgha (*Gauḍīya* magazine editorial board), 1925[‡]

Nikhila Vaiṣṇava Sammilanī (Pan-Vaiṣṇava assembly), 1927[§]

Pāramārthika-ālocanā-samiti (Association for spiritual discussion), 1933[¶]

London Gaudiya Mission Society, 1934[**]

Śrī Vraja-dhāma-pracāriṇī Sabhā (Association for preaching about Vraja-dhāma), 1935[††]

Anukūla-Kṛṣṇānuśīlanāgāra (Center for cultivating favorable service to Rādhā's Kṛṣṇa), 1936[‡‡]

Daiva-varṇāśrama Saṅgha (Association for godly *varṇāśrama*), 1936[§§]

Major Receptions

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was received as a state guest by the Maharajas of Banaras, Jaypur, Jeypore, Kashmir, Mayurbhanj, Mysore, Tippera (Tripura), Travancore, and the Maharani of Cooch Behar. He was honored by public receptions in Allahabad, Banaras, Bijnor, Bombay, Cuttack, Dacca, Ellore, Gauhati, Jammu, Jaypur, Kashmir, Kovvur, Kurukṣetra, Madras, Mymensingh, Mysore, Nathdwar, New Delhi, Travancore, Uḍupī, and possibly in other places.

APPENDIX FIVE

Disciples' Names

The following names were available when this book went to print. In old Gauḍīya Maṭha publications, many persons stated to be disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī are identified only by secular names, most of which are not included herein. For economy of space, names are rendered without *dāsa* or *dāsī.* Almost certainly, many more devotees than are listed below had received honorific titles.

Sannyasis

Names of sannyasis in order of their accepting sannyāsa. *Possibly "Bhakti Rañjana Bhaktisāra" is wrongly positioned, although certainly he was among the l ast.*

Bhakti Pradīpa Tīrtha, Bhakti Viveka Bhāratī, Bhakti Vijñāna Āśrama, Bhakti Prakāśa Araṇya, Bhakti Hṛdaya Bon, Bhakti Sarvasva Giri, Bhakti Vaibhava Sāgara, Bhakti Śrīrūpa Purī, Bhakti Svarūpa Parvata, Bhakti Vilāsa Gabhastinemi, Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara, Bhakti Bhūdeva Śrauti, Bhakti Prasūna Bodhāyana, Bhakti Sudhīra Jācaka, Bhakti Sambal Bhāgavata, Bhakti Sambandha Turyāśramī, Bhakti Gaurava Vaikhānasa, Bhakti Kevala Auḍulomi, Bhakti Rañjana Bhaktisāra, Bhakti Vicāra Jājābar.

Also: Bhakti Svarūpa Purī. (The name Bhakti Vilāsa Parvata is featured in Gauḍīya Maṭha publications; it appears that this is the later *sannyāsa* name of Bhakti Svarūpa Purī.[*])

Bābājīs

Advaita, Baṅka Bihārī, Bhagavān, Braja Bihārī, Govinda, Hari, Jagadānanda, Kṛṣṇa, Mukunda, Narasiṁha, Rādhā-Dāmodara, Rādhā-Govinda, Vaiṣṇava.

Vraja-vāsīs (Vānaprasthas)

Bhagavān Bhakti Vrata, Baṅka Bihārī Bhakti Tuhina,* Dhavala, Hari Kiśora Bhakti Prakaṭa, Indranātha, Jagadānanda Bhakti Vikāsa, Mukunda Gopāla Bhakti Madhura, Nityānanda Sevā-kodaṇḍa, Prāṇa Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā-Vallabha Bhakti Lalāma, Satya Vāstava, Yajñeśvara Bhakti Yajña.

Brahmacārīs

Names of disciples who either were brahmacārīs *at the time of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's departure or who passed on before him. Many later entered the* gṛhastha-āśrama, *and some took* sannyāsa.

Acintya Govinda, Adhīra-candra, Adhiyajña, Agha Damana Bhakti Sarvasva, Amarendranātha, Anādi Caraṇa, Anādi Govinda, Anādi Kiśora, Anādi Kṛṣṇa Upadeśaka, Ānanda, Ananta Rāma Bhakti Sāra, Ananta Vāma Bhaktisāra, Ananta Vāsudeva Parāvidyābhūṣaṇa Mahā-mahopadeśaka, Ananta Viśvambhara, Atulānanda Bhakti Kaṅkana, Bhagavān Bhakti Vikāsa, Bhāgavata-janānanda, Bhūta-bhṛt Bhakti Saudha, Bhūta-bhṛt, Bhūvaneśvara Bhakti Viveka, Cidānanda, Cidghanānanda, Cinmayānanda, Dāmodara, Dayānidhi (1), Dayānidhi (2), Devakīnandana (1), Devakīnandana (2), Dharmeśvara, Dhīra Kṛṣṇa, Dhruvānanda, Dineśa-candra, Gadādhara, Gaṇapatinātha, Gaura, Gaura-guṇānanda Bhakti Vijñāna, Gaura Hari, Gaura Kāvya-vyākaraṇa Tīrtha, Gaurānugraha Bhakti Vijñāna, Gaura-prapanna, Gaurendu Sevā Vrata, Ghanaśyāma, Gokulānanda, Gopāla, Goṣṭha-bihārī, Govardhana, Hare Rāma, Hari-caraṇa Bhakti Kiraṇa, Haripada Bhakti Mayūkha, Hayagrīva Bhakti-śāstrī Mahopadeśaka, Hṛdaya Govinda, Indupati, Jagabandhu, Jagamohana, Jagannātha, Jati-śekhara Bhakti Kumuda, Jaya Gaurāṅga, Jaya Kṛṣṇa, Kalyāṇa-kalpataru Bhakti Ratna, Karṇānanda, Kavi-bhūṣaṇa Bhakti Jīvana, Keśava Kṛṣṇa, Kīrtanānanda, Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa-kānti Bhakti Kusuma Mahopadeśaka, Kṛṣṇa-kāruṇya Bhakti Maṇḍapa, Kṛṣṇa Keśava, Kṛṣṇānanda Upadeśaka, Kṛṣṇa-prasanna, Kṛṣṇa-prema, Kṛṣṇa Rañjana, Kulaśekhara, Madana Gopāla, Mahānanda Bhaktyāloka, Maheśvara, Maṅgala-nilaya, Mati Kṛṣṇa, Mṛgāṅka, Mukunda Mādhava, Mukunda Vinoda Bhakti Madhura, Nadiyānanda, Nanda Dulāla, Nanda Gopāla Bhakti Tūla, Nandalāla, Nanda-prāṇa, Narahari Sevā-vigraha, Narasiṁha, Narasiṁha Bhakti Kāñcana, Narottamānanda Bhakti Kamala, Navīna Mādhava, Netrānanda, Nimāi Caraṇa, Nitāi Upadeśaka, Nitāi Rāgālaṅkāra, Nitya Kṛṣṇa, Nityānanda, Nitya Prakāśa, Nṛsiṁhānanda Bhakti Vivṛti, Paramapada, Parameśvara Prasāda, Parameśvarī Prasāda, Parānanda, Pareśānubhava, Pareśa-candra, Paśupatinātha, Patita Pāvana Vidyārṇava, Phenopānanda, Prabhāta Kusuma Kṛti Kovid, Praṇavānanda Pratna-vidyālaṅkāra Mahopadeśaka, Praphulla Kumāra, Pūrṇānanda, Pūrṇaprajña, Puruṣottama, Pyārī-mohana, Pyārī-mohana Kāru Kovida, Rādhā-Govinda Kāvya-vyākaraṇa Tīrtha, Rādhā-Mohana, Rādhā-Ramaṇa Rāga Kumuda, Rādhā-Śyāma, Rādhā-Vallabha, Rādhe Śyāma Bhakti Patākā, Rāghava Caitanya, Rāma Bhakti Mauli, Rāma Govinda Vidyānanda, Rāmakṛṣṇa, Rāma Vinoda, Rāsa Bihārī Bhakti Jyotiḥ, Rathārūḍha, Revatī Mohana, Revatī Ramaṇa Bhakti Niścaya, Rūpa Vilāsa, Saccidānanda, Sadānanda, Sajjanānanda, Śambhunātha, Sanātana, Sanat Kumāra, Santoṣa Kumāra, Sarveśvarānanda Rāga Ratna Upadeśaka, Sat-prasaṅgānanda, Satya Govinda, Satyānanda, Satya Vigraha Rāga-Suhṛt, Sevā Vilāsa, Siddha-svarūpa Vidyā-vāgīśa Bhakti-śāstrī Mahopadeśaka, Śivānanda Rāga Bhūṣaṇa, Śrī-bhūṣaṇa, Śrīkānta, Śrīpati Caraṇa, Sudarśana, Sujanānanda, Sundara Gopāla, Sundarānanda, Sūryakānta, Svādhikārānanda, Śyāmasundara, Trailokyanātha, Tribhuvana Mohana, Uddhāraṇa, Uddhavānanda, Varadarāja, Vareṇya Govinda Sevārṇava, Vinoda Bihārī Kṛtiratna Upadeśaka, Vinoda Gopāla, Vinoda Mādhava, Vipina Bihārī, Vīracandra Bhakti Kuśala, Yādavānanda,

Yamalārjuna, Yogendra Mohana.

Gṛhasthas

Names of gṛhasthas *who were so at the time of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's departure or who departed before him. Some later took* sannyāsa.

Abhaya Caraṇāravinda (1), Abhaya Caraṇāravinda (2), Adhokṣaja Sevā Kovida, Ādi-keśava Bhakti Lalāṭa, Advaya Govinda, Advaya-jñānānanda, Akiñcana, Amṛtalāla, Amṛtānanda Sevā Vilāsa, Ānanda-līlāmaya-vigraha, Anaṅga Mohana, Ananta-brahma, Ananta-deva Bhakti Vibudha, Aniruddha Caraṇa, Anupama, Aprākṛta Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī Mahā-mahopadeśaka, Aprameya Bhakti-śāstrī Upadeśaka, Atīndriya Bhakti Guṇākara, Atīndranātha Vedānta Vācaspati Upadeśaka, Avidyā-haraṇa, Baṅkima-candra, Bhakti Saurabha Bhakti Maireya Bhakti-śāstrī, Bhava-bandha-cchid Bhakti Saurabha, Bhūdeva, Bhavadeva Bhakti Maireya Upadeśaka, Brahmaṇya-deva, Śacīndra Kumāra, Caitanya-cāturī, Cakradhāra, Cakrapāṇi, Dāmodara Caitanya, Dāmodara Svarūpa Kavi-bhūṣaṇa, Daṇḍapāṇi Dolāi, Dayāmaya Bhagavān, Dhāma Kṛtikuśala, Dhanyātidhanya, Dhīra Lalita, Durdaiva-mocana, Gadādhara Bhakti Suhṛt, Garahara Gadādhara, Gaura Kṛṣṇa, Gaurasundara, Ghanaśyāma, Goloka Bihārī, Gopendra-candra Gaṅgopādhyāya, Gopī Ramaṇa, Guṇamaṇi, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hari Kiśora, Hari Nārāyaṇa, Haripada Bhakti Vibudha, Haripada Vidyāratna Kavi-bhūṣaṇa, Hari Prapanna, Hari Vinoda, Hṛdayānanda, Indra Nārāyaṇa-candra Bhakti Bhūṣaṇa, Jadumaṇi,* Śreṣṭhyārya Jagabandhu Bhakti Rañjana, Jagad-uddharaṇa Bhakti Bāndhava, Jagajjīvana Bhakti-śāstrī, Japa Gaura, Jaya Gopāla Bhakti Śaśāṅka, Jaya Govinda, Jīvana Kṛṣṇa Sevā Suhṛt, Kālacāṅda, Kali-vairī, Kamalākānta, Kānāi-lāla Bhakti Mahim, Kānāi-lāla Kavi-tīrtha, Kiśorī Mohana Bhakti Bāndhava Vidyā-viśārada Mahopadeśaka, Kṛṣṇa Caraṇa, Kṛṣṇadāsa Adhikārī Kavirāja, Kṛṣṇa Kiśora, Kṛṣṇa-kṛpā, Kṛṣṇapada, Kṛṣṇa Prasāda Bhakti Bhūṣaṇa, Kṛṣṇa Prasaṅga Bhakti Gaurava, Kṛṣṇa Sundara Bhakti Bhūṣaṇa, Kṛpā-sindhu, Kuñja Bihārī Vidyābhūsaṇa Mahā-mahopadeśaka Ācāryatrika, Madana Mohana, Madhusūdana Bhakti Vilāsa Mahopadeśaka, Madhusūdana Śarma Bhakti Viśārada, Mahāmaheśvara, Mahendranātha, Manobhirāma, Mohinī Mohana, Mukunda Gopāla, Mukunda Vinoda Bhakti Madhura, Muralī Mohana, Murārī Bhakti-śāstrī, Murāri Mohana, Nāgendra Gopāla Bhakti Kevala, Nanda Kiśora Kṛti Deśaka, Nandalāla Kāvya Tīrtha, Nani Gopāla Bhakti Svarūpa, Nārāyaṇa, Nārāyaṇa Bhakti Sudhākara Mahā-mahopadeśaka, Narottama, Navīna Kṛṣṇa Vidyālaṅkāra, Nimāi Caraṇa Bhakti Locana, Nimānanda Sevā Tīrtha Bhakti-śāstrī Mahopadeśaka, Nitāi,† Nitya Gaurāṅga Bhakti Rasānanda, Nitya Gopāla Bhaktyalaṅkāra, Niyamānanda, Paramānanda Vidyāratna Bhakti Kuñjara Upadeśaka, Prāṇa Kṛṣṇa Vanacārī, Prapannārtihara Bhakti Bhūṣaṇa, Prema Prayojana, Priyanātha Mukherji, Pulina Bihārī Bhakti Bhūṣaṇa, Pyārī-mohana Bhakti Bhūṣaṇa, Rādhā-Caraṇa, Rādhā-Govinda Kāvya-Purāṇa Tīrtha Rāga Tīrtha Upadeśaka, Raghunandana Singhji, Raghunātha Mahāpātra, Rajani, Rāma Govinda Vidyānanda, Ramānātha, Rohiṇī Kumāra, Śacī-dulāla, Śacīndranātha Cakravartī Sapta Tīrtha, Sādhana, Sajjana Suhṛt, Śreṣṭhyārya Sakhī Caraṇa Rāya Bhakti Vijaya, Saṁvidānanda Pratna-vidyā Viśārada, Sanātana, Sanātana Prasāda, Saṅkīrtana, Sāraṅga Murāri, Śarat-candra Bandhopādhyāya, Satīśa-candra Bose, Satya Vāstava, Satyavrata, Saundarye-kāma-koṭi, Surendranātha Bhakti Vāridhi, Sevānukūla, Śivada-vāstava-vigraha, Śivanātha, Śivendranātha, Śrīdhāma Kṛti Kuśala, Śrīnivāsa Bhakti Prasūna,

Śreṣṭhyārya Śrīnivāsa Dalmin, Śrīvatsalāñchana Bhakti Bhūṣaṇa, Śubha Vilāsa Bhakti Mayūkha Mahopadeśaka, Śyāmā Caraṇa, Śyāmasundara, Sudarśana, Sudarśana Sanātana Bhakti Vaibhava, Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda Mahā-mahopadeśaka, Sureśa-candra Bhaṭṭācārya Divyasūri, Suvilāsa, Trailokyanātha Rāya, Uddharaṇa, Uddhava, Ujjvala-rasānanda Kavi-tīrtha, Upendranātha, Ürdhvamanti Bhakti Viśārada, Urukrama, Vaikuṇṭhanātha, Vaiṣṇava, Vanamālī, Veṇī Mādhava, Vicitra Bhūṣaṇa, Vidhu Bhūṣaṇa Śāstrī, Vilāsa Vigraha Bhakti Kūla, Viṣnu Bhakti Sindhu, Vinoda Bihārī, Vipina Bihārī, Vraja Kiśora, Vrajendra Kumāra, Vrajeśvarī Prasāda Bhakti Bhāskara, Vṛndāvana-candra Bhaṭṭācārya, Yādavendra Nandana, Yaduvara Bhakti-śāstrī Sampradāya-vaibhavācārya Mahopadeśaka, Yadunandana, Yajñeśvara Bhakti Yajña, Yaśodā-dulāla, Yaśodā Kumāra, Yaśodānandana Bhāgavata Bhūṣaṇa, (Prof.) Yatīndra Mohana Ghoṣa, Yatirāja, Y. Jagannāthan Bhakti Tilaka, Yogendra, Yuga-dharma-pāla.

Annadā devī, Aparṇā devī, Dayāmayī devī, Kaiśorī Sundarī devī, Latikā Mañjarī devī, Sarojavāsinī devī, Suṣamā devī.

APPENDIX SIX

Examinations

Required reading for the eligibility test to enter the Bhakti-śāstrī course

1) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*

2) *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*

3) *Bhakti-ratnākara*

4) *Jaiva Dharma*

5) *Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta*

6) *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā*

7) *Gauḍīya Kaṇṭhahāra*

Required reading for the Sampradāya-vaibhavācārya test

(Main)

1) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* with *Amṛta-pravāha-bhāṣya* and *Anubhāṣya* commentaries

2) *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata,* with *Gauḍīya-bhāṣya*

3) *Śrī Bhakti-ratnākara*

4) *Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*

5) Those sections of *Śrī Sajjana-toṣaṇī,* the *Gauḍīya,* and the *Nadia Prakash* that give descriptions of the four *sampradāyas.*

(Subsidiary)

1) *Prapannāmṛta,* by Anantācārya—biographies of saints of the Śrī *sampradāya* up to and including Śrī Rāmānujācārya

2) *Madhva-vijaya,* by Trivikramācārya—a biography of Śrī Madhvācārya

3) Hindi *Bhaktamāla,* by Nābhādāsa

4) *Vaiṣṇava-mañjuṣā-samāhṛti*

5) *Gauḍīya Kaṇṭhahāra*

6) *Brāhmaṇa o Vaiṣṇavera Tāratamya-viṣayaka Siddhānta*

7) *Ācāra o Ācārya*

8) *Gauḍa-maṇḍala-parikramā-darpaṇa*

9) *Citre Navadvīpa*

10) *Vaisnavism, Saivism and Minor Religious Systems,* by Sir R.G. Bhandarkar.[1]

Examination Papers

(Samples)

Bhakti-śāstrī

First Paper

(Full score—100; time—15 *daṇḍas*)*

1. Give meanings for the following words: *phalgu-vairāgya, rāgātmika, catuṣka, ākalpa, digdhā, pratīpa, mṛti, avahitthā, amarṣa, bhāva-sandhi, śābalya, aparasa, ṣoḍaśopacāra, pariṇāma-vāda, kila-kiñcita, vivarta-vāda, acintya-bhedābheda, samadṛśa, tattva-vādī, pāṣaṇḍī, beḍā-nṛtya, sañcārī, nijachāyā, tadekātmā, śākhā-candra-nyāya, māyāvādī, mahā-vākya, śārīraka, ghaṭa-paṭiyā, markaṭa-vairāgya, āśā-bandha, prema-vaicittya, parakīya, adhirūḍha, puṣṭi-mārga, micchā-bhakta, karmī, jñānī, vipralambha.*
2. Define the term *bhakti.* What are its divisions, identity, and steps in development? What is the nine-fold method of *bhakti*?
3. What are the identities of Viṣṇu and a Vaiṣṇava? What is the difference between these two and other *tattvas*? Write a list of incarnations of Viṣṇu and the divisions thereof. According to *śāstra* and the *ācāryas,* how is Viṣṇu compared to Śiva, Brahmā, and other demigods?
4. What is the true nature of a guru? What are the qualifications of a guru? What are the different types of guru? According to *śāstra,* under what conditions may one reject a guru? Give some scriptural evidence and indication of practical applications.
5. What is the intrinsic nature of *mukti*? What are the different types of *mukti*? Describe the nature of Goloka and Vaikuṇṭha, and give the names of devotees there according to their situation in the five kinds of *rasas.*
6. Describe the glories of, philosophical understanding of, glorification of, and offenses to the holy name.
7. Describe the ten *daśās* (states), the sixty-four *aṅgas* (limbs) of *bhakti,* the sixty-four qualities of Kṛṣṇa, and the sixty-one meanings of the *ātmārāma* verse.
8. Select verses from *Mukunda-mālā, Stotra-ratna, Hari-bhakti-kalpa-latikā, Ṣoḍaśa-grantha,* and *Nimbārka-daśa-ślokī* that indicate the pure devotion preached by Mahāprabhu.
9. Write the main verses and general arrangement of these works: (a) *Stava-mālā,* (b) *Stavāvalī* or *Stavāmṛta-laharī,* (c) *Padyāvalī,* (d) *Prārthanā,* (e) *Kalyāṇa-kalpataru.*

Second Paper

(Full score—100; time—15 *daṇḍas*)

1. Compose brief essays on the following subjects:

   a. *Nāma-bhajana* and its topmost position.

   b. The means to attain Kṛṣṇa.

   c. *Jñānīs* above *karmīs;* devotees having renounced *jñāna* above *jñānīs;* above them devotees fixed in love of God; above them the *gopīs;* above them Śrī Rādhikā and Her equally important Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa; the successively graded dear ones to the Lord; above them those even more dear; and the superiority of the most dear above even them.

2. Write a list of devotional books by subject, giving their authors and a brief description of the essence of their themes.

3. Describe how you came to devotional service.[2]

APPENDIX SEVEN

Bengali and Vaiṣṇava Calendars

Each major linguistic region of India has its own traditional lunisolar calendar, the years beginning on varying months. *Smārtas* call the *adhika-māsa* (intercalary month) Mala-māsa, "contaminated month." In Gaurābda—the Gauḍīya calendar (calculated from the birth of Lord Caitanya), which parallels the Bengali calendar—the extra month is called Puruṣottama and is considered auspicious by Vaiṣṇavas.

Below is a list of 1) each Bengali month, 2) the name (in parentheses) of Viṣṇu that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura ascribed to it, based on scriptural precedents and employed in Gaurābda, and 3) the corresponding Gregorian months. Each Bengali month begins almost exactly in the middle of the associated Gregorian month.

1. Vaiśākha (Madhusūdana), April–May
2. Jyaiṣṭha (Trivikrama), May–June
3. Āṣāḍha (Vāmana), June–July
4. Śrāvaṇa (Śrīdhara), July–August
5. Bhādra (Hṛśīkeśa), August–September
6. Āśvina (Padmanābha), September–October
7. Kārtika (Dāmodara), October–November
8. Agrahāyaṇa (Keśava), November–December
9. Pauṣa (Nārāyaṇa), December–January
10. Māgha (Mādhava), January–February
11. Phālguna (Govinda), February–March
12. Caitra (Viṣṇu), March–April

There is a difference of 593 to 594 years between the Bengali calendar and the Gregorian; thus 1307 Bengali corresponded to 1900–01 Gregorian.

APPENDIX EIGHT

Altered Toponyms

Geographical names that are rendered in this book according to the spelling then current in British India, followed by their present de-anglicized forms

Banaras (Benares)—Varanasi;* Bombay—Mumbai; Calcutta—Kolkata; Cawnpore—Kanpur; Conjeevaram—Kanchipuram; Dacca—Dhaka; Ellore— Eluru; Gauhati—Guwahati; Jaypur—Jaipur; Madras—Chennai; Trichinopoly— Tiruchirapalli; Trivandrum—Thiruvanantapuram; Vizagapattam—Visakhapatnam.

Also: Burma—Myanmar.

Chronology of Noteworthy Events

6 February 1874—appeared in Purī.

Five months old—taken onto Lord Jagannātha's *ratha* and there received the Lord's garland and rice *prasāda.*

Ten months old—taken to Ranaghat, Bengal, where he spent his infancy.

Early childhood—vowed never to eat mangos.

1881—initiated by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura into worship of a Kūrma-*śīlā,* the recitation of a Nṛsiṁha-mantra, and chanting the *mahā-mantra* on beads, all together signifying his formal entry into Vaiṣṇavism.

Teen years—was awarded the title Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī for excellence in astronomical studies; began translating books on *jyotiṣa* and writing articles on *jyotiṣa* and religious topics; formed Cira-kumāra Sabhā, or August Assembly.

1892—entered Sanskrit College, in Calcutta.

1895—quit college.

1895–1905—employed by successive kings of Tripura.

1897—established Sārasvata Catuṣpāṭhī, an academy of astronomy; began observing Cātur-māsya.

1899—published and edited articles in *Nivedana* magazine.

Early 1900—initiated by Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī.

1900—published *Baṅge Sāmājikatā.*

March 1901—accompanied Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura to Purī and there spent much time over the next few years engaged in deep study and *bhajana.*

Early 1905—toured South India, visiting holy places, meeting scholars and religious personalities, and conducting research.

1905–14—undertook *śata-koṭi-nāma-yajña,* the great vow to chant at least 3 lakh names (192 rounds) daily until 1 billion names were completed.

1906—initiated his first disciples.

September 1911—addressed an extensive gathering on the issue of brahminical eligibility, his first major public speaking triumph.

Late 1911—again successfully addressed a public meeting, this time on the Godhood of Lord Caitanya and the eternality of Gaura-mantras.

March 1912—fasted for four days at Kashimbazar Sammilanī.

November 1912—with other devotees, toured places in West Bengal visited by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His associates.

February 1913—rented a large house in Calcutta.

April 1913—established a press at the aforementioned location.

7 September 1913 through 14 June 1915—composed his *Anubhāṣya* commentary on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta.*

1914—moved the press to Māyāpur.

June 1914—the *tirobhāva* of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

December 1914—inaugurated Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *puṣpa-samādhi* at Godruma.

1915—relocated the press to Krishnanagar.

February–March 1915—revived Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *Sajjana-toṣaṇī.*

September 1915—was involved in the first major public meeting in honor of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, at Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣad, Calcutta.

November 1915—the *tirobhāva* of Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī.

March 1918—took *sannyāsa,* with the name Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja; established Śrī Caitanya Maṭha and the worship of Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga–Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī there.

May 1918—established the first Bhaktivinoda Āsana, at Daulatpur Prapannāśrama, Khulna.

June 1918—on a preaching tour headed for Purī, established a Bhaktivinoda Āsana at Kuamara, Mayurbhanj.

November 1918—established a Bhaktivinoda Āsana at Ultadingi Junction Road, Calcutta.

November 1918—reintroduced Vaiṣṇava *śrāddha.*

December 1918—preaching tour in Jessore and Khulna.

February 1919—reestablished the Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā.

March 1919—held the first Gaura-*pūrṇimā* festival at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, and thereat inaugurated Bhakti-śāstrī examinations.

April 1919—established a Bhaktivinoda Āsana at Rāmajīvanapura.

June 1919—oversaw the annual *tirobhāva-mahotsava* for Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura being held for the first time at Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja, and thereat installed a deity of him.

October 1919—undertook a preaching tour in East Bengal directly after a devastating cyclone.

February–March 1920—reintroduced Navadvīpa-dhāma Parikramā.

September 1920—established deities at Calcutta Bhaktivinoda Āsana and renamed it Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha.

Late 1920 to early 1921—worked intensively on *Vaiṣṇava-mañjuṣā;* entered an extended period of concentration on writing, resulting in several major publications in upcoming years.

November 1920—inducted his first sannyasi, Śrīmad Bhakti Pradīpa Tīrtha Mahārāja.

1921—published *Ācāra o Ācārya,* causing shock to so-called Vaiṣṇavas conducting business in the name of religion.

October–November 1921—in a series of lectures in Dacca, explained the first verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in thirty ways.

1922—established Śrī Puruṣottama Maṭha in Purī.

June 1922—launched the *Gauḍīya* magazine.

1922—first met Abhaya Caraṇa De, later known worldwide as His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

1923—set up the Gaudiya Printing Works in Calcutta, wherefrom serial publication of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* was begun.

February 1924—was honored at the first annual Vyāsa-*pūjā* and thereat accepted the title Prabhupāda.

Early 1925—toured Gauḍa-*maṇḍala* with about a hundred devotees, then led the fifth annual Navadvīpa-dhāma Parikramā, during which the party was attacked.

1926—established Śrī Sanātana Gauḍīya Maṭha at Banaras, Śrī Saccidānanda Maṭha at Cuttack, and Śrī Brahmā Gauḍīya Maṭha at Ālālanātha.

March 1926—launched the *Nadia Prakash.*

November 1926—inaugurated the new temple of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha and installed large deities therein, then embarked on an extensive tour throughout India.

1927—resumed publication of *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* in Sanskrit and Hindi, and in English as the *Harmonist.*

1927—established Parā-vidyā-pīṭha at Māyāpur.

September 1927—embarked on an extensive tour of North India.

February 1928—the *Nadia Prakash* became a daily.

November 1928—in Kurukṣetra, inaugurated the pilot Pradarśanī Theistic Exhibition and a Gauḍīya Maṭha branch.

1929—discussions with Professor Albert E. Suthers of Ohio State University.

January 1930—installed deities at Prayāga and there preached to thousands at Kumbha-melā.

February–March 1930—presented a massive diorama exhibition in Māyāpur.

October 1930—opened a new showpiece temple in Bāg-bazar, Calcutta.

December 1930–January 1931—toured South India, and established five of an intended 108 *pāda-pīṭhas* of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

1931—began publication of the *Bhāgavata,* a Hindi fortnightly.

September 1931—held another successful diorama exhibition, this time in Calcutta.

November 1931—inaugurated the Thakur Bhakti Vinode Institute in Māyāpur.

January 1932—was accorded a mammoth civic reception in Madras.

1932—began publication of *Kīrtana* (an Assamese monthly) and *Paramārthī* (an Oriya fortnightly); completed publication of *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* with commentary.

1932—initiated a series of examinations in ten subject areas for the titles Bhakti-śāstrī and Ācārya.[*]

June 1932—toured South India and was received as a state guest by the Maharaja of Mysore and Maharaja of Trivandrum.

October–November 1932—led Vraja-maṇḍala Parikramā.

January 1933—held another major diorama exhibition in Dacca.

April 1933—dispatched three disciples to London.

August 1933—second diorama exhibition in Kurukṣetra.

September 1933—toured Navadvīpa-*maṇḍala* with a party of devotees.

June 1934—an Adhokṣaja deity was discovered at the Yogapīṭha and identified as the former household deity of Śrī Jagannātha Miśra.

Kārtika 1934—discovered the place where Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī received *darśana* of the Gopāla deity.

January 1935—Sir John Anderson, governor of Bengal, visited Māyāpur.

1935—*Sarasvatī-jayaśrī* was published.

March 1935—a grand new temple at the Yogapīṭha was auspicated by the Maharaja of Tripura.

April 1935—sent preachers to Burma.

June 1935—his disciples made the first radio broadcast of Hari-*kathā,* from the Indian Broadcasting Service Centre, Calcutta.

September 1935—published the final volume of an annotated full-length edition of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

September 1935—received Swami Bon on his return from Europe accompanied by two Germans.

During 1936—failing health; continued to travel and preach widely; opened several centers.

October 1936—sent Śrī Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī to preach in England.

1 January 1937—departed this mortal world.

Notes

References of the type "vol. *x,* p. *y*" indicate entries in *Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava.*

Lectures, Writings, and Colloquies

Aṣṭottara-śata Śrī

1 This sentence is based on *Upadeśāmṛta* 9.

2 This first half of this statement is based on *Upadeśāmṛta* 10; the second, on Cc 2.8.58–65.

3 *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 3.8.

4 Cc 2.22.126.

Two Poems by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

1 This preamble is not included in the issue of *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* wherein this poem first appeared. It was probably composed later, possibly in the edition published as a booklet in 1324 (Bengali).

Gauḍīya Defined

1 Cc 2.1.19, commentary.

2 Ibid.

3 The above is from a page of a *Gauḍīya* on which the date and number were illegible.

4 SPU 180.

The Gauḍīya Maṭha: Its Message and Activities

1 *Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭaka* 8.10; Cc 2.10.119.

Is Gauḍīya Maṭha the Only Way?

1 *Gauḍīya* 14.172–74.

2 Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, *Vilāpa-kusumāñjali* 6.

3 Devakīnanda Dāsa, "Vaiṣṇava Vandanā."

The Ācārya's Unequalled and Unsurpassed Greatness

1 The quote from Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is from *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 4.31.

2 Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, "The Unique Position of an Ācārya," in *The Life and Teachings of the Four Ācāryas,* trans. Bhūmipati Dāsa (Vṛndāvana: Jai Nitāi Press, 2007).

Assuming the Responsibility of Being Guru

1 Cc 2.7.128–29.

2 SB 11.17.27.

3 Ibid.

4 Quoted text—*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.23.

5 *Ādau guru-pūjā*—apparently Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's own words summarizing various *śāstrīya* statements, e.g., Brs 1.2.74.

6 Extracted from *Harmonist* 25.195–200 (February 1928), which was based on the Bengali that appeared in *Gauḍīya* 6.19.301–6 and *Śrīla Prabhupādera Boktṛtābalī* 4.14–29.

Deceitful Disciples

1 Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, *Muktā-carita.*

2 Rūpa Gosvāmī, *Stava-mālā.*

3 Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, *Śaraṇāgati.*

Genuine and False Gaura-bhajana

1 Rūpa Gosvāmī, *Stava-mālā.*

2 *Śikṣāṣṭaka* 8.

3 *Mukunda-mālā-stotra* 5.

4 *Śikṣāṣṭaka* 4.

5 Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, *Caitanya-candrāmṛta* 5.

6 Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, *Caitanya-candrāmṛta* 36.

7 Cc 3.4.71.

8 Brs 1.2.74.

9 Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura, *Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta* 107.

10 Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, *Caitanya-candrāmṛta* 5.

11 Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, *Caitanya-candrāmṛta* 49.

12 A paraphrased translation of part of Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Nāmāṣṭaka* 1. For the full verse and translation, see vol. 1, p. 198.

13 "Kātyāyana-saṁhitā," quoted as Cc 2.22.91.

To Be a Vraja-vāsī

1 Cc 2.13.137.

2 *Govardhane nā uṭhio*—presumably a paraphrase of Cc 3.13.39.

3 Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, *Prārthanā.*

A Lecture at Rādhā-kuṇḍa

1 See Sanātana Gosvāmī's *Dig-darśinī-ṭīkā* on *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* 2.1.10.

2 *Nārada-pañcarātra.*

3 *Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.29.

A Lecture in Vṛndāvana

1 The Bengali original appears in *Śrīla Prabhupādera Boktṛtābalī* 3.59–63, wherein it is dated 6 Kārtika.

2 *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 1.2.23; *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 3.2.3.

A Lecture at Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha

1 Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, *Prema-bhakti-candrikā.*

2 Adapted from Cb 2.13.43.

3 *Kena Upaniṣad* 4.6.

4 Cc 1.6.86.

Gandhiji's Ten Questions

1 *Harmonist* 30.203–9. See also: Gandhi, “Questions for Shastri Parishad,” *Collected Works* 58.268, item 374.

Questions to a Prākṛta-sahajiyā Convention

1 Sj 68–69.

2 Cc 3.4.71.

Appendixes

Selected Quotations

1 Letter (19 June 1935), *Patrāvalī* 3.58.

2 *Gauḍīya* 17.562.

3 *Amūlya-vāṇī* 8.

4 Letter (25 November 1935), *Patrāvalī* 3.89.

5 Lecture (22 Āṣāḍha 1333), SPU 392.

6 Letter (3 November 1931), *Patrāvalī* 2.104.

7 *Amūlya-vāṇī* 8.

8 *Amūlya-vāṇī* 9.

9 SPU 402.

10 *Amūlya-vāṇī* 8.

11 *Amūlya-vāṇī* 9.

12 *Gauḍīya* 15.23–24.8.

13 Gv 1.168.

14 Gv 1.245.

15 *Gauḍīya* 15.23–24.8.

16 Lecture (24 February 1924); *A Ray of Vishnu* 175.

17 *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 19.10.380.

18 PST 94.

19 Ibid.

20 Gv 1.102.

21 Letter (23 February 1934), Sj 208.

22 *Amūlya-vāṇī* 9.

23 SPU 401.

24 *Gauḍīya* 17.338.

25 SPU 399.

26 Ibid.

27 PST 94.

28 Cb 1.9.213, commentary.

29 Quoted by Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda (SB 5.6.4, purport).

30 SCT 81.

His Horoscope

1 SB 7.4.37.

Examinations

1 *Gauḍīya* 9.57.

2 Harikṛpā Dāsa, *Parama Gurudeva,* 63–65.

Sanskrit/Bengali Pronunciation Guide

Used within this book is a standard transliteration system accepted by scholars that approximates Sanskrit sounds. Most Bengali words transliterated herein are also rendered according to this system (employed in the publications of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda), even though the pronunciation of some Bengali letters differs significantly from their Sanskrit equivalents. Bengali and Oriya also differ from Sanskrit in not being entirely phonetic. Much of the Sanskrit quoted in this book was spoken by Bengalis and Oriyas, who would have pronounced it in their characteristically distinctive manner.

In both Sanskrit and Bengali, long vowels are indicated by a line above the letter representing it.

In Sanskrit, the short vowel **a** is pronounced like the *u* in *trust,* long **ā** as in *father*. Short **i** is pronounced as in *bliss,* long **ī** as in *unique;* short **u** as in *flute,* long **ū** like the *oo* in *moo.*

The vowel **ṛ** is pronounced like the *ri* in *Krishna;* **e** as in *they* or sometimes as in *pen;* **ai** as in *aisle;* **o** and **au** as in *glow* and *beau.*

The *anusvāra* (**ṁ**), a pure nasal sound, is pronounced as in the French word *bon;* the *visarga* (**ḥ**), a strong aspirate, like a final **h** sound. At the end of a couplet, **aḥ** is pronounced *aha,* **iḥ** pronounced *ihi,* etc.

The guttural consonants **k, kh, g, gh,** and **ṅ** are pronounced from the throat in much the same manner as in English—**k** as in *kind,* **kh** as in *pack-horse,* **g** as in *god,* **gh** as in *bighearted,* and **ṅ** as in *sing.*

The palatal consonants **c, ch, j, jh,** and **ñ** are pronounced: **c** as in *chant,* **ch** as in *thatch hut,* **j** as in *joy,* **jh** as in *bridgehead,* and **ñ** as in *banyan.*

The retroflex consonants **ṭ, ṭh, ḍ, ḍh,** and **ṇ,** and also the rare vowel **ÿ**, are pronounced with the tip of the tongue turned up and drawn back against the dome of the palate: **ṭ** as in *temple,* **ṭh** as in *light-hearted,* **ḍ** as in *devotee,* **ḍh** as in *Godhead,* **ṇ** as in *nectar,* and **ÿ** as in *love.*

The dental consonants **t, th, d, dh** and **n** are pronounced in the same manner as the celebrals, but with the tip of the tongue against the inside of the upper teeth.

The labial consonants **p, ph, b, bh,** and **m** are pronounced with the lips: **p** as in *perfect,* **ph** as in *uphold,* **b** as in *boon,* **bh** as in *subhead,* and **m** as in *mantra.*

The semivowels **y, r, l,** and **v** are pronounced as in *yoga, respect, love,* and *vow*.

The sibilants **s, ṣ,** and **ś** are pronounced: **s** as in *soul,* **ṣ** as in *shine* but with the tip of the tongue

turned up and drawn back against the dome of the palate, and **ś** as in *shine* but the tip of the tongue against the inside of the upper teeth.

Bengali and Oriya sounds that are pronounced differently from Sanskrit are:

Short **a** is pronounced like the *o* in the Southern British pronunciation of *hot;* **ai** like the *oy* in *boy.* In Bengali, the final **a** of many words is silent.

When between two vowels, **ḍ** is pronounced similarly to the *r* in *red;* **ph** is pronounced as *f;* **v** is pronounced as *b,* except after *s, ṣ,* or *ś,* when it becomes almost silent.

M is pronounced as in *mantra,* except after *s, ṣ, ś,* and *kṣ,* in which cases it becomes almost silent, and after *d, ḍ, ḍh, dha, t, th, ṭ,* and *ṭh,* when it becomes almost silent and doubles the consonant it follows (e.g., *padma* is pronounced approximately *padda*).

When at the beginning of a word, and after *l* and *r,* **y** is pronounced as *j.* After other consonants, it becomes almost silent and doubles the consonant it follows (e.g., *anya* is approximately pronounced *anna*). After vowels it is pronounced as in *prayer.*

S, ṣ, and **ś** are each pronounced as in *she;* and **kṣa** as *kha.*

Glossary

Text within quotation marks immediately following an entry word is a literal translation thereof. Only contextual meanings of Sanskrit words are given.

108—*See* **Aṣṭottara-śata.**

A—*(Sanskrit)* a prefix denoting negation. Examples: *asat*—false, not *sat* (real); *acit*—material, not *cit* (conscious). When preceding a vowel, the prefix becomes *an.* Examples: *anartha*—an obstruction to *artha* (that which is desirable); *anitya*—temporary, not *nitya* (eternal).

Abhakti—non-*bhakti;* the opposite or absence of devotional service.

Abhidheya—"to be named or mentioned"; (1) devotional service; (2) *sādhana-bhakti. See also* **Prayojana; Sādhana-bhakti; Sambandha.**

Absolute Truth—an English rendering of *Brahman;* (1) the ultimate source of everything; (2) the supreme independent reality. *See also* **Supreme Personality of Godhead.**

Ācāra—behavior, especially that in accord with *śāstra-vidhi. See also* **Sadācāra.**

Ācārya—(1) a guru who has realized the import of *śāstra,* and by practice and precept establishes *siddhānta* and *ācāra;* (2) institutional head of a *sampradāya* or religious institution; (3) name or a part thereof for teachers, or persons descended from teachers.

(His Divine Grace) A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami (Śrīla) Prabhupāda—(1896–1977) the founder-*ācārya* of ISKCON, and most prominent of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's disciples in the era after his disappearance.

Acintya—inconceivable.

Acintya-bhedābheda-tattva—the doctrine of inconceivable simultaneous oneness and difference (of Godhead and His energies, and forms of Godhead); the philosophical system taught by Lord Caitanya. *See also* **Tattva.**

Adhikāra—qualification, level of eligibility.

Adhikārī—"eligible person"; (1) an epithet denoting a devotee's level of spiritual advancement, as in *kaniṣtha-, madhyama-, and uttama-adhikārī* (see individual terms); (2) designation of a married male devotee, as in the name Kṛṣṇa dāsa Adhikārī.

Adhokṣaja—"imperceptible to mundane vision"; Bhagavān.

Ādi-Śaṅkarācārya—(686–718) the original Śaṅkarācārya, as distinguished from *ācāryas* in

his guru-*paramparā,* who to this day also use the title Śaṅkarācārya.

Ādi-Varāha— "the original boar," the boar avatar of Lord Viṣṇu.

Advaita—"nonduality," oneness; (1) a name for the Supreme Lord; (2) *advaita-vāda.*

Advaita (Ācārya/Prabhu)—an avatar of the Supreme Lord, and an intimate associate of Lord Caitanya.

Advaita-vāda—*See* **Māyāvāda.**

Advaya—*(adj.)* nondual, absolute.

Advaya-jñāna—(1) knowledge that there is no difference between Kṛṣṇa and His names, forms, qualities, weapons, and so on, and that anything pertaining to Him is of the same spiritual nature; (2) the object of that knowledge, who is nondifferent from it, namely Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This meaning is often conveyed by the term *advaya-jñāna-tattva* (see SB 1.2.11).

Āgama—a class of scripture, complementary to the original Vedas, that sets forth theology and practical directions on worship. The Āgamas are classified according to three categories: Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva, and Śākta.

Agha, Baka, Pūtanā—three demons who entered Vṛndāvana and were killed by Kṛṣṇa.

Ahaṅgrahopāsanā—a strain of impersonalism whereby the worshiper accepts or conceptualizes himself as identical to the object of worship. (*Aham*—I; *g raha*—accepting; *upāsanā*—worship)

Ajña-rūḍhi—"the meaning (*rūḍhi*) of a word accepted by the less intelligent (*ajña*)"; the conventional, external meaning of a word. *See also* **Vidvad-rūḍhi.**

Ākhḍā—temple with residential quarters for renunciants, particularly of the type inhabited by *bābājīs* in Bengal and Orissa. *See also* **Maṭha.**

Akiñcana—possessionless. A synonym of *niṣkiñcana.*

Alaṅkāra-śāstra—the body of Vedic works that discuss *kavya* (poetry), which is defined as *rasātmika-vākya* (words having *rasa* as their essence). Thus discussion of *rasa* is necessary in the study of poetry. (*Alaṅkāra*— decoration)

Ālvār—one of twelve celebrated ancient saints of the Śrī *sampradāya.*

Āmnāya—the message of *śāstra* as received through *paramparā.*

Ānanda—happiness.

Anartha—"(that which is) useless or harmful"; in Gauḍīya theology it denotes an activity, attitude, or tendency that is an impediment to devotional advancement (e.g., gambling, lust).

Anartha-nivṛtti— (1) the stage in devotional advancement in which *anarthas* are transcended and overcome; (2) disappearance of all unwanted contamination within the heart. *See also* **Artha-pravṛtti.**

Annakūṭa—annual festival held to celebrate Govardhana-*pūjā,* Kṛṣṇa's worship of Govardhana. Cooked rice (*anna*) is stacked to resemble a hill (*kūṭa*— pile), and many other preparations are made for the Lord's pleasure.

Antaryāmī—*See* **Paramātmā.**

Anvaya—(1) the natural sequence of words; (2) *(in Sanskrit exegesis)* words of verses syntactically repositioned and presented in prose, to make their meaning clearer.

Anyābhilāṣa—any desire other than for satisfying Kṛṣṇa. (*Anya*—other; *abhilāṣa*—desire)*

Anyābhilāṣī—a person cultivating desires other than to serve Kṛṣṇa.

Aparādha—offense. *See also* **Nāmāparādha; Vaiṣṇava-aparādha.**

Apa-sampradāya—deviant sect. *See also Sampradāya.*

Apa-siddhānta—incorrect philosophical conclusion. *See also* **Siddhānta.**

Appearance—Āvirbhāva (q.v).

Aprākṛta—"transcendental to matter."

Ārati—(in Bengali, Hindi, and other Indian languages; derived from the Sanskrit word *ārātrika*) ceremony of worship (most commonly performed in public or household temples for worship of deities), the essential part of which is offering a lighted ghee- or oil-lamp by waving or circling it before the worshiped person or object. Often other items, such as incense, water, flowers, and fans, are also offered, and accompanying mantras chanted.

Arcana—procedures for worship, especially of the deity of the Lord. *See also* **Deity; Pūjā.**

Ardha Kumbha-melā—*See* **Kumbha-melā.**

Arjuna—the devotee and intimate friend to whom Kṛṣṇa spoke *Bhagavad-gītā.*

Artha—purpose, motive, meaning, reason, money, etc. *See also* **Dharma-artha-kāma-mokṣa.**

Artha-pravṛtti—(1) progress toward the actual goal of life; (2) realization of and entrance into one's eternal position of servitude to Kṛṣṇa and entrance into His pastimes. *See also* **Anartha-nivṛtti.**

Ārya— (1) respectable, righteous person; (2) one interested in higher values of life and in advancing spiritually; (3) upper-caste person of North India; (4) member of the Ārya Samāj.

Āsana—sitting mat, sitting place, seat, place.

Asat—incorrect, improper, bad, false, ephemeral, non-existent, untrue.

Asat-saṅga—unholy association.

Āśīrvāda-patra—certificate of blessing.

Āśrama—any of the four spiritual orders in the Vedic social system: *brahmacarya, gṛhastha, vānaprastha,* and *sannyāsa. See also* **Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Āśraya—(1) shelter; (2) a receptacle or recipient in which any quality or article is retained or received.

Āśraya-vigraha—"the form of the recipient," the receptacle of *prema*; (1) Śrī Rādhā; (2) one's own guru; (3) any advanced devotee.* *See also* **Viṣaya-vigraha.**

Aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā—pastimes of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa during the eight periods of the day, different activities being performed during different periods, as outlined in *Govinda-līlāmṛta* and other confidential works; the highest object of contemplation for Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.

Aṣṭottara-śata—"108." It is considered an auspicious number and appears in many contexts. For instance, there are 108 principal *Upaniṣads,* 108 principal *gopīs,* 108 beads in the standard rosary of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, and many compilations of 108 names for various deities.

Asura—(1) person of demonic mentality, specifically one who is opposed to Viṣṇu and Viṣṇu-*bhakti;* (2) one of the cosmic demonic beings often referred to in the Vedic literature.

Avatar—(Sanskrit: *avatāra*—descent) (1) descent from the spiritual world of the Supreme Lord or a special devotee; (2) a personage thus descended.

Avidyā—ignorance.

Āvirbhāva—Vaiṣṇava terminology for the apparent birth of a Viṣṇu-avatar or an exalted devotee, in contradistinction to the birth of conditioned souls forced into various material bodies according to their karmic reactions. Rendered in English as *appearance,* because such eternal personages, rather than coming into existence, become manifest to mortal vision like the appearance of the sun each morning. *See also* **Tirobhāva.**

Āvirbhāva-tithi—anniversary of the appearance of a Viṣṇu-avatar or an exalted devotee. *See also* **Tirobhāva-tithi; Tithi.**

Bābājī—(1) a celibate devotee who lives extremely simply and austerely, his life devoted to spiritual practices; (2) an imitator who accepts the simple dress of a *bābājī* yet does not practice the prescribed rigid renunciation. *See also* **Bhek.**

Babu—(1) *(especially in Bengali society)* an honorific appellation for an esteemed gentleman; (2) (a) a foppish well-to-do sense enjoyer, or (b) *(Gauḍīya Maṭha usage; informal, derogatory)* a materialistic devotee whose behavior resembles that of sense enjoyers.

Bāg-bazar—the area of Calcutta to which Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha relocated in 1930.

Bāhādura—"hero"; common appendage to titles of men of *kṣatriya* caste or in high administrative posts.

(Śrīla) Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa—(eighteenth century) a prominent Gauḍīya *ācārya* best known for his composition of *Govinda-bhāṣya* (q.v.).

Bāla-Gopāla—(1) Kṛṣṇa in boyhood; (2) common deity form of Kṛṣṇa in boyhood.

Bali-dāna—offering of goats and other animals in sacrifice to certain demigods.

Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣad—Bengali Literature Association.

Bhadra-loka—the modernized Bengali middle class, a social elite that first emerged in the mid-nineteenth century. (*Bhadra*—gentle, polite)

Bhagavad-gītā—sacred teachings of Kṛṣṇa spoken to Arjuna on the Battlefield of Kuruksetra, which expound devotional service as the essence and ultimate goal of all knowledge, and the only means to attain the highest spiritual perfection.

Bhagavān—"possessor of all opulences in full"; (1) Supreme Personality of Godhead; (2) highly exalted personality.

Bhāgavat(a)—"in relation to Bhagavān"; (1) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam;* (2) great devotee.

Bhāgavata-dharma—"practices of great devotees" or "dharma in relation to Bhagavān"; Kṛṣṇa consciousness, pure devotional service.

Bhāi—brother.

Bhajana— (1) dedicated life of intense devotional service based on hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa and remembering Him; (2) *(mainly Hindi usage)* devotional song.

Bhajana-kuṭīra—a hut used normally by a single sadhu for his residence and *bhajana.*

Bhajanānandī—"one who takes pleasure in *bhajana*"; a devotee who withdraws from the world to concentrate on devotional practices. *See also* **Nirjana-bhajana**.

Bhakta—a devotee of the Supreme Lord. *See also* **Vaiṣṇava.**

Bhakti—*See* **Devotional Service.**

Bhakti Bhavan—Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's house in Calcutta.

Bhakti-kuṭī—"cottage of devotion"; Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's place of *bhajana* and residence in Purī.

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu—(The ocean of the nectar of devotional mellows) Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's definitive treatise on the science of devotional service.

Bhakti-ratnākara—(The jewel-mine of devotion) a seventeenth-century biography of Lord Caitanya and some of His principal associates, by Śrī Narahari Cakravartī.

Bhakti Vijaya Bhavan—Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's house at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha.

(Śrīla) Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura—(1838–1915) the inaugurator of the modern-day *śuddha-bhakti* movement, and the father of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Bhārata(-varṣa)—the *śāstrīya* name for India.

Bhāṣya—commentary, especially the original commentary, on a scripture.

Bhāva—emotion, mood, attitude, feeling. In Gauḍīya theology it also refers to the initial stage of ecstatic feelings preceding the full manifestion of *prema*.

Bhavan(a)—house, residence, building, mansion.

Bhava-sāgara—"the ocean of material existence." *See also* **Sāgara.**

Bhāvuka—"a person imbued with *bhāva*"; *(common usage)* a sentimentalist.

Bhek—apparel, particularly the simple short cloth worn by *bābājīs.* "Giving *bhek*" means to induct into *bābājī* life.

Bhikṣā—(1) the act of begging or requesting, particularly a renunciant's practice of begging door to door for alms; (2) alms collected by such begging; (3) a renunciant's acceptance of a meal in a householder's home.

Bhikṣu— "beggar"; mendicant or sannyasi.

Bhoga—(1) material enjoyment; (2) items specifically meant to be offered for the Lord's enjoyment, such as food or flowers.

Bhogī—an enjoyer.

Bodily conception (of life)—the basic misapprehension of every materially conditioned living entity that the body is the self and that life is meant only for maintenance of, and enjoyment through and in relation to, the body.

(Lord) Brahmā—the demigod who is the first created living being and secondary creator in each material universe. In this particular universe, he is also the original preceptor of the Brahma-Mādhva-Gauḍīya *sampradāya,* the discipular line descending from himself through Madhvācārya to Lord Caitanya and beyond.

Brahmacārī—a member of the first order of Vedic spiritual life (*brahmacarya*), i.e., a celibate student of a guru. *See also* **Āśrama; Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Brahmacarya—celibate student life, the first *āśrama* of the Vedic social system. *See also* **Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Brahma-gāyatrī—the most prominent Vedic mantra for worshiping the Supreme Lord. It is also called Veda-mātā (mother of the Vedas). *See also* **Gāyatrī.**

Brahmajyoti—the spiritual effulgence emanating from the transcendental body of Lord Kṛṣṇa and illuminating the spiritual world. *See also* **Brahman.**

Brāhma-muhūrta—the period of day, auspicious for spiritual practices, spanning from approximately ninety to forty-five minutes before sunrise.

Brahman—(1) Absolute Truth; (2) the state of spiritual existence; (3) the impersonal all-pervasive aspect of the Absolute Truth.

Brāhmaṇa—(1) a priest or intellectual fixed in *sattva-guṇa* and knowledge of Brahman, and thus qualified as a member of the first occupational division of the Vedic social system; (2) erroneous designation of a certain caste or members thereof claiming to be *brāhmaṇas* solely on the basis of heredity. *See also* **Varṇa; Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Brāhmaṇatva—the status of being a *brāhmaṇa.*

Brāhmaṇī—wife of a *brāhmaṇa.*

Brahma-rākṣasa—a powerful and malicious ghost of a *brāhmaṇa.*

Brahma-saṁhitā—an ancient scripture (only the fifth chapter of which is extant) highly regarded by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Brahmo— a member of the Brahmo Samāj, a religious group formed in Bengal in the nineteenth century. (See vol. 2, pp. 3–4)

Cādar—shawl.

Caitanya-bhāgavata—the Bengali biography by Śrīla Vṛṇdāvana dāsa Ṭhākura (completed in 1575) about Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, principally describing His pastimes in Navadvīpa before He accepted *sannyāsa*.

Caitanya-caritāmṛta—the Bengali biography composed by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī (some forty years after *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*) about Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, principally describing His pastimes after He accepted *sannyāsa.*

Caitanya Mahāprabhu—(1486–1534) recognized by Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas to be the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, manifested as His own devotee to impart love of Himself, especially by *saṅkīrtana.* He is the root of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma and is the Gauḍīyas' object of worship. In English He is often referred to as Lord Caitanya.

(Śrī) Caitanya Maṭha—established in 1918 in Māyāpur by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, this became the parent Maṭha of subsequent branches of the original Gauḍīya Maṭha organization. Today it remains the headquarters of one of the two entities spawned by the first bifurcation of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's institution.

Caṇḍāla—an outcaste of the lowest category.

Caraṇāmṛta—water, sometimes mixed with other substances, that was used to bathe either the Lord (usually in His deity form) or the feet of a devotee.

Caritra—character, biography.

Caste Goswamis—(Bengali: *jāta-gosāñis)* seminal descendants of the principal followers of Lord Caitanya who claim the right to initiate disciples solely on the basis of that identification.

Cātur-māsya—"four-month period"; the four months, roughly coincident with the rainy season, during which special austerities are observed by followers of Vedic culture.

Chand Kazi—a Muslim magistrate of Nadia who had initially opposed Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement but whose mind changed after discussing with the Lord. (See Cc 1.17)

Conditioned—*(Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's usage)* pertaining or subject to the conditions of material life.

(Indian National) Congress—the predominant organization seeking Indian independence from British rule.

Dā—*(Bengali)* suffix appended to a name of an elder brother or a male of similar status, connoting both affection and respect.

Daiva-varṇāśrama-dharma—the authentic caste system, based not on birth (in contradistinction to *āsura-varṇāśrama,* prominent in Kali-yuga) but on one's qualities and activities. *See also* **Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Dakṣiṇā—an offering, in cash or kind, presented to a guru, a *brāhmaṇa,* or a similarly worshipable person.

Daṇḍa—(1) stick; (2) staff carried by a sannyasi. *See also* **Ekadaṇḍa; Tridaṇḍa.**

Daṇḍavat—"like a rod." In Bengali, this word is used for *daṇḍavat-praṇāma* (prostration offered by falling flat on the ground).

Darśana—(1) vision; (2) philosophy, or a philosophical system; (3) audience of the Supreme Lord or His representative.

Dāsa—*(generally lowercase)* (1) servant; (2) surname given to a devotee at initiation, denoting him as a servant of Kṛṣṇa; (3) *(capital)* family name in Bengal and Orissa.

Daśakam—poem consisting of ten verses.

Dāsya-rasa—the mellow of affectionate servitude. *See also* **Rasa.**

Deity—(1) the manifestation of the Supreme Lord as a scripturally authorized form for accepting worship; (2) worshipable forms of pure devotees and demigods. The deity form of the Lord appears in eight materials: stone, wood, metal, earth, paint, sand, the mind, or jewels (see SB 11.27.12).

Demigod—a resident of the higher planets. Principal demigods are assigned roles by the Supreme Lord for overseeing universal affairs, and are worshiped for material boons by materialistic followers of Vedic culture.

Desire tree—a spiritual tree that fulfils the desires of its supplicants.

Deva—(1) the Supreme Lord, a demigod, or a godly person; (2) honorific suffix for the Supreme Lord, a demigod, or a godly male.

Devī—(1) goddess or godly female; (2) honorific suffix for a goddess or godly female.

Devotional service—the process of worshiping the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī

Kṛṣṇa, by dedicating one's thoughts, words, and actions to Him in loving submission. *See also* **Kṛṣṇa consciousness.**

Dhāma—the transcendental abode of the Lord, eternally existing as the spiritual world beyond the material universes and also manifested within the material world as certain holy places.

Dharma— (1) religious laws described in *śāstra;* (2) ordained duties as described in *śāstra* for specific roles within *varṇāśrama* society, e.g., *sannyāsa-dharma, strī-dharma* (women's duties); (3) every living being's eternal, constitutional occupation of service to the Supreme Lord. *See also* **Dharma-artha-kāma-mokṣa.**

Dharma-artha-kāma-mokṣa—*(conventional usage)* mundane piety, economic development, sense enjoyment, and liberation, the four aspects of sub-transcendental Vedic religious endeavor.

Dharmaśālā—charitable lodge for pilgrims.

Dhārmika—adjectival form of (the word) *dharma.*

Dīkṣā—initiation. In the Gauḍīya Maṭha, *dīkṣā* refers to what in ISKCON is known as "second" or *brāhmaṇa* initiation.

Dīkṣā-guru—initiating spiritual master.

Dīkṣita—(1) a person who has received *dīkṣā;* (2) the state of having received *dīkṣā.*

Disappearance—*tirobhāva* (q.v.).

District—administrative subunits established by the British in the provinces of India. Most were named after the headquarters of jurisdiction (for instance, the headquarters of Jessore District was the town of Jessore).

Duḥkha—unhappiness, misery, suffering, pain.

Durgā—Lord Śiva's consort, the goddess personifying and overseeing the material energy, who is worshiped by materialists for material boons. *See also* **Māyā.**

Dust—Gauḍīyas highly regard particles of earth taken from holy places or the lotus feet of elevated devotees. Placing such dust on one's head and/ or tongue demonstrates submission and humility and is recommended in scripture (e.g., SB 5.12.12 and Cc 3.16.60) as important for spiritual progress.

Dvāpara-yuga—the third in the universal cycle of four ages, characterized by a further one-fourth decrease in *dhārmika* principles from the preceding age, Tretā-yuga (q.v.).

Ekadaṇḍa—the symbolic staff composed of one (*eka*) bamboo rod (*daṇḍa*) carried by sannyasis of the Mādhva and Śaṅkara schools.

Ekadaṇḍī—"one with an *ekadaṇḍa*"; a sannyasi of the Mādhva or Śaṅkara *sampradāya.*

Ekādaśa-bhāva—the eleven characteristics of a devotee in the perfectional stage of directly serving Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in a spiritual body as a maidservant.

Ekādaśī—eleventh day of both the waxing and waning moon, most favorable for cultivating Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti,* during which Vaiṣṇavas increase their spiritual practices and fast from at least grains and beans.

Enchantress—*(Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's usage)* when used without a qualifier, refers to the personality of illusion, Māyā (q.v.).

Flat-rice—(Bengali: *ciḍā*) pre-boiled and pounded rice needing only a few minutes of soaking to become edible, thus a simple and commonplace preparation.

Gadādhara—"club-holder"; a name for the Supreme Lord.

Gadādhara Paṇḍita—a specific associate and the internal potency of Lord Caitanya.

Gāndharvikā—Rādhā, the source of Gāndharva-*vidyā* (arts and skills such as music and dancing), whereby She pleases Kṛṣṇa unlimitedly.

Gaṇeśa—the elephant-headed demigod. A son of Lord Śiva, he is supplicated for material opulence and removing obstacles to material endeavors, and is the scribe who recorded the *Mahābhārata.*

Gaṅgā—Ganges River.

Garuḍa—the eagle who is the carrier of Lord Viṣṇu.

Garuḍa-stambha—at the entrance to a Viṣṇu temple, the column bearing the form of Garuḍa.

Gauḍa, Gauḍa-deśa, Gauḍa-maṇḍala—the historical and spiritual name for the region roughly corresponding to West Bengal, India, particularly denoting it as a principal place of pastimes of Lord Caitanya and His associates.

Gauḍīya—*(commonly understood meanings)* (1) of or pertaining to Gauḍa, an ancient city in Bengal; (2) pertaining to the Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* derived from Lord Caitanya (e.g., Gauḍīya *siddhānta*); (3) a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava; (4) the erstwhile flagship periodical of the Gauḍīya Maṭha; *(esoteric meaning)* (5) a devotee of Rādhārāṇī.

Gauḍīya Maṭha—(1) the organization founded by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī; (2) a

branch monastery of the aforesaid organization; (3) the generic term for the diaspora of organizations consisting of the first two branches that sundered from the original Gauḍīya Maṭha, and for subsequent groups (other than ISKCON) formed by discipular descendants of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī; (4) a branch monastery of the aforementioned diaspora.

Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava— (1) a member of the Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* originating from Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu; (2) of or pertaining to that *sampradāya.*

Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma, Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism—the practice and culture of devotional service in pursuance of the principles given by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Gaura, Gauracandra, Gaurahari, Gaurāṅga, Gaurasundara—names of Lord Caitanya referring to His beautiful golden form.

Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā—the book by Śrī Kavi-karṇapūra (written 1567 AD) that reveals the identities in Kṛṣṇa-*līlā* of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's principal associates.

Gaura-jayantī, Gaura-paurṇamāsī, Gaura-pūrṇimā—the *āvirbhāva-tithi* of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the full-moon day in the month of Phālguna. (*Paurṇamāsī, pūrṇimā*—full-moon day)

(Śrīla) Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī—(1838–1915) the guru of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Gaura-nāgarīs, Gaurāṅga-nāgarīs—a heretic Gauḍīya sect.

Gāyatrī—a mantra recited within the mind by suitably initiated persons at sunrise, midday, and sunset. *See also* **Brahma-gāyatrī.**

Giridhārī—a name of Kṛṣṇa meaning "the lifter of Govardhana Hill."

Gītā—*Bhagavad-gītā.*

Gīta-govinda—a highly esoteric and transcendentally erotic poem composed by Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī (c. eleventh century) that describes intimate pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Its verses and themes were repeatedly heard, sung, and meditated on by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and inspired the composition of innumerable Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *kīrtanas.*

Gītāvalī—a collection of songs by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

Godhead—*See* Absolute Truth.

Godruma, Godrumadvīpa—an area of Navadvīpa-*dhāma.* Therein Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura constructed his residence and place of *bhajana* named Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja.

Gokula—(1) Vṛndāvana manifested within the material world as a facsimile of Goloka; (2) in Vraja-*maṇḍala,* the particular village that was the site of Kṛṣṇa's residence during much of His childhood.

Goloka, Goloka Vṛndāvana—the topmost section of the spiritual world.

Goloka-darśana—spiritual outlook.

(Śrīla) Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī— one of the Six Gosvāmīs. He is known as the *smṛty-ācārya* of the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* for compiling *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* and *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā* (books of rituals and ceremonies for Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas).

Gopī—a female cowherd, particularly one of the spiritual cowherd damsels who serve Kṛṣṇa in Goloka or Gokula.

Gopījanavallabha, Gopīvallabha—names of Kṛṣṇa meaning "lover of the *gopīs.*"

Gopīśvara—an epithet of Lord Śiva, and particularly a form that is worshiped in a specific temple in Mahāvana, Vraja-*maṇḍala.* The name means that he is the form of Lord Śiva (*īśvara*) as worshiped by the *gopīs.*

Gopīvallabhpur—the seat of the Śyāmānandī sect (q.v.)

Gosvāmī—(1) one who fully controls his senses; (2) title designating a sannyasi; (3) adjective denoting the Six Gosvāmīs.

Gosvāmī literature—that written by the Six Gosvāmīs. It may also indicate works of other major Gauḍīya *ācāryas,* especially Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura and those preceding him.

Goswami—a surname of families often claiming spiritual privilege on the basis of birth. *See also* **Caste Goswamis**.

Govardhana—(1) the especially sacred hill within Vraja-*maṇḍala* that is nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa; (2) the village adjacent to Govardhana Hill.

Govardhana-śilā, Giridhārī-śilā—any stone from Govardhana Hill. Many Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas worship such *śilās.*

Govinda—a name of Kṛṣṇa meaning "He who gives pleasure to the land, the cows, and the senses."

Govinda-bhāṣya—the gloss on *Vedānta-sūtra* compiled by the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa Prabhu.

Govinda-līlāmṛta—the seminal work by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī **that** details Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā. See also* **Aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā.**

Grantha—book.

Gṛhastha—(1) a married person acting in accordance with Vedic religious principles for the purpose of spiritual elevation; (2) the second *āśrama* of Vedic spiritual life. *See also* **Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Guṇa—(1) attribute, quality; (2) one of the three cosmic behavorial influences—i) goodness (*sattva*), ii) passion (*rajas)*, and iii) ignorance (*tamas*)—characterized respectively by i) detachment, serenity, and spiritual inclination; ii) attachment and inordinate endeavor for sense gratification; and iii) madness, indolence, and sleep. These are described in considerable depth in *Bhagavad-gītā.*

Guru-Gaurāṅga—guru and Gaurāṇga. Here *guru* principally refers to one's immediate guru. In the Gauḍīya Maṭha, deities of Guru-Gaurāṅga are usually presented as a wooden form of Gaurāṇga and a pictorial image of the guru(s).

Gurukula—a guru's ashram, wherein young *brahmacārīs* reside and receive education.

Guru-paramparā—the chain of preceptorial succession from guru to disciple to granddisciple, and so on, through which transcendental knowledge is conveyed. *See* **Sampradāya.**

Guru-varga—present and previous gurus taken as a collective group. (*Varga*— division, class, set, group)

Gurvaṣṭaka—eight prayers composed by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura in glorification of the guru.

Halavā—dessert made from semolina (or other grain), ghee, sugar, and water.

Hanumān—the most famous monkey-servant of Lord Rāma.

Hare—(1) vocative form of *Harā* (Lord Kṛṣṇa's internal energy, i.e., Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī); (2) vocative form of *Hari.*

Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra—the great incantation for deliverance: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Hari—"He who takes away [obstacles to spiritual progress]"; the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Hari-bhakti-vilāsa—the treatise composed by Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī that delineates and explains rules, regulations, and rituals for Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.

Harijana—"a person of God"; (1) a devotee, (2) a common misnomer for an outcaste or low-class person.

Hari-kathā—discussion of the glories, activities, and qualities of Hari. *See* **Kṛṣṇa-kathā.**

Harināma—(1) the holy name(s) of the Supreme Lord; (2) initiation by a guru into the chanting of the holy name (known in ISKCON as "first initiation").

Harināmāmṛta-vyākaraṇa—"the grammar which is comprised of the nectar of the holy names"; an instructional Sanskrit grammar composed by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī.

Harināma-saṅkīrtana—*See* Saṅkīrtana.

Harmonist—the English magazine of the Gauḍīya Maṭha at the time of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.

Himācala—another name for the Himālayas.

Hiraṇyakaśipu—the ancient despot infamous for persecuting his five-year-old son, Prahlāda, because of Prahlāda's Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti*.

Impersonalism—*See* Māyāvāda.

Initiation—*See* Dīkṣā.

ISKCON—International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Founded in 1966 in New York by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, it is the principal manifestation of what is popularly known as the Hare Krishna movement.

Iṣṭa-goṣṭhī—discussion of spiritual topics among devotees of similar ideals.

Īśvara—"controller"; in general Hindu usage, often denotes Lord Śiva as the controller of the material energy; particularly in Vaiṣṇava parlance, refers to the Supreme Lord, Hari.

(Śrīla) Īśvara Purī—a disciple of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī (q.v.), and the initiating guru of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Jaḍa—inanimate, material, foolish.

Jagad-darśana—material outlook.

Jagad-guru—"the preceptor of the universe"; one whose instructions may be beneficially followed by everyone within the universe.

Jagāi and Mādhāi—the criminal brothers who were reformed by the intervention of Lord

Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda (narrated in *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*).

Jagannātha—a name of Kṛṣṇa meaning "Lord of the universe." It particularly refers to a specific deity form of Kṛṣṇa, whose large temple and elaborate worship therein at Purī, Orissa, is especially famous.

(Śrīla) Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī—(nineteenth century) a great Gauḍīya *ācārya* who was instrumental in locating the apperance site of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Jagannātha Miśra—the father of Lord Caitanya.

Jagannātha-vallabha Udyāna—a garden in Purī.

Jagat—"universe." Unless otherwise specified, it generally refers to the material world.

Janmāṣṭamī— the *āvirbhāva-tithi* of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Japa—soft recitation of the Lord's holy names, usually on beads. *See also* **Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra.**

Japa-mālā—string of beads used for counting *japa.*

Jāta-gosāñis—*See* Caste Goswamis.

Jaya—victory. Often used as an expression of praise.

Jaya-dhvani—recitation of the names of worshipable persons, places, etc., each utterance being followed by group exclamation of *Jaya!* (*Dhvani*—sound)

Jīva—the living entity, who is an eternal individual soul, an atomic particle of the Supreme Lord's energy.

(Śrīla) Jīva Gosvāmī—(1511–1608) one of the Six Gosvāmīs. In his writings he detailed the principles of Gauḍīya philosophy.

Jīvan-mukta—a person liberated in this very lifetime. *See also* **Mukti.**

Jñāna—(1) knowledge; (2) abstruse spiritual knowledge, based on Vedic texts, purported to lead to liberation.

Jñāna-kāṇḍa—(1) the portion of Vedic literature that presents abstruse spiritual knowledge for achieving liberation from material existence; (2) the path of dedication to actions in pursuance of that knowledge and goal.

Jñānī—(1) *(conventional usage)* a knowledgeable person; (2) *(primary usage of Gauḍīya*

Vaiṣṇavas) a seeker of the absolute truth through philosophical speculation, usually with an impersonalist bent; adherent of the *jñāna-kāṇḍa;* (3) *(ontological usage)* devotee in full knowledge of Kṛṣṇa as the Absolute Truth.

Jyotiṣa—the Vedic science of astronomy and astrology.

Jyotiṣī—a practitioner of *jyotiṣa.*

Kaccha—the part of a dhoti or sari that is folded and tucked in.

Kali—vice personified.

Kālī—a fierce form of Durgā (q.v.).

Kali-yuga—the present age characterized by hypocrisy, quarrel, and *adharma,* which began five thousand years ago and is the last in the universal cycle of four ages.

Kāma—(1) desire, either mundane or spiritual; (2) lust. *See also* **Dharma-artha-kāma-mokṣa.**

Kaniṣṭha-adhikārī—a neophyte devotee, on the lowest level of devotional service, with little understanding of *tattva* and having a materialistic outlook.

Karatālas— small hand cymbals played in accompaniment to *kīrtana.*

Karma—(1) action; (2) fruitive activity performed in accordance to *karma-kāṇḍa* injunctions; (3) the principle governing material action and reaction; (4) reactions to previously performed activities; destiny.

Karma-kāṇḍa—(1) the path of fruitive activities, particularly sacrificial rites, for achieving resultant sense gratification; (2) the portion of Vedic literature that recommends performance of such activities.

Karma-kāṇḍīya—pertaining to *karma-kāṇḍa.*

Karmī, Karma-kāṇḍī—a follower of *karma-kāṇḍa,* engaged in materialistic work and having little or no spiritual inclination.

Kārṣṇa—(1) a devotee of Kṛṣṇa; (2) a member of Kṛṣṇa's family.

Kārtika—the sacred month (mid-October to mid-November) of Dāmodara, the final and most important month of Cātur-māsya, during which Vaiṣṇavas traditionally reside in a holy place, especially Mathurā-Vṛndāvana, and perform extra austerities and spiritual practices.

Kārtika-vrata—special vows followed during Kārtika. Also known as Ürja-*vrata* or

Dāmodara-*vrata.*

Kathā—talk, discourse, story, topic, words, message. *See also* **Hari-kathā; Kṛṣṇa-kathā.**

Kātyāyanī—a name of Durgā (q.v.).

Kaupīna—loincloth. In Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, a sanctified *kaupīna* is a symbol of renunciation awarded to men entering *bābājī* life.

Kāyastha—a subcaste.*

Khol—*See* Mṛdaṅga.

Kīrtana—(1) chanting of the names and glories of the Supreme Lord; (2) a sung litany; (3) a specific song of glorification. *See also* **Bhajana; Saṅkīrtana.**

Kīrtanīyā—a performer of sung *kīrtana,* especially a lead singer.

Krishnanagar—a town near Māyāpur.

Kṛpā— mercy.

Kṛṣṇa—original, all-attractive form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness—acting in knowledge of one's relationship with Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Absolute Truth. *See also* **Devotional service.**

Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī—a name of many *bābājīs.* In *Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava* it mostly refers to the personal servant (1887–1915) of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

(Śrīla) Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī—(?–1582) the author of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (for which he is primarily known) and also *Śrī Govinda-līlāmṛta,* another seminal Gauḍīya work.

Kṛṣṇa-kathā—a synonym of Hari-*kathā* (q.v.).

Kṣatriya—(1) a warrior and ruler; (2) the second occupational division of the Vedic social system. *See also* **Varṇa; Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Kuliyā—(1) the medieval name of the site of much of the present town of Navadvīpa; (2) the name usually used by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and his discipular followers to refer to the modern town of Navadvīpa, to avoid connoting it as the original Navadvīpa mentioned in old records as the birthplace of Lord Caitanya. (Most of those who reject Māyāpur as the birthplace of Lord Caitanya regard the location of Kuliyā as currently unascertainable.)

Kumbha-melā—a gargantuan month-long religious conclave held every twelve years at

Prayāga. Six years after each Kumbha-melā an Ardha (half) Kumbha-melā is held, which also attracts large crowds.

Kuṇḍa—a pond.

Kurukṣetra—the ancient place of pilgrimage that was also the site of the great Battle of Kurukṣetra, fought five thousand years ago (elaborately described in *Mahābhārata*).

Kuṭī, kuṭīra—hut, cottage.

Lābha-pūjā-pratiṣṭhā—"gain, worship, and fame," desire for which is mentioned by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu as three major obstacles on the path of Kṛṣṇa conscious progress (Cc 2.19.159).

Lakṣmaṇa—one of Lord Rāmacandra's three younger brothers. *See* Rāma.

Lakṣmī—the goddess of fortune and eternal consort of Lord Nārāyaṇa (Viṣṇu).

Līlā—(1) transcendental activities of Bhagavān or His liberated devotees. Such activities are conducted under the internal, pleasure-giving potency of Bhagavān, in contradistinction to the activities of conditioned souls, which are conducted under the external, pain-giving potency of Bhagavān; (2) a specific episode within the activities of the Supreme Lord or His liberated devotees.

Līlā-smaraṇa—contemplation of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, especially his Vraja-*līlā*. This arises naturally in the heart of a pure devotee, but is also attempted by certain Gauḍīya sects as a *sādhana* based on visualizing Kṛṣṇa's pastimes and one's role therein.

Lord Caitanya—*See* Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Madana-mohana—a name of Kṛṣṇa meaning "He who bewilders Cupid."

Mādhava—a name of Kṛṣṇa meaning "the husband of the goddess of fortune."

(Śrīla) Mādhavendra Purī—a great Gauḍīya *ācārya* who appeared prior to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He was the first Vaiṣṇava in the present era to manifest the sentiment of separation from Kṛṣṇa, which is the essence of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava ontology. He was also the guru of many prominent devotees, including Śrīla Īśvara Purī and Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu.

Madhura—*(adj.)* sweet.

Madhura-rasa, Mādhurya-rasa—"mellow of sweetness"; topmost *rasa* of sweet exchanges between Kṛṣṇa and His transcendental consorts or girlfriends (*gopīs*). *See also* **Rasa.**

Madhva, Madhvācārya—the great Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* of the twelfth (or thirteenth) century who

preached *dvaita-vāda,* the philosophy of difference between the Supreme Lord and all else that exists, He being absolutely independent and everything else fully dependent on Him.

Mādhva—pertaining to Madhva or to Vaiṣṇavism coming in his line.

Madhyama-adhikārī—an intermediate devotee, on the middle level of devotional service, who is a serious yet still not perfected *sādhaka.*

Mahā *(prefix)*—great.

Mahābhārata—the famous epic and seminal literature at the basis of Vedic culture; includes the *Bhagavad-gītā.*

Mahājana—"great person"; *(Vaiṣṇava usage)* a great devotee. It often refers to one of the twelve personages mentioned in SB 6.3.20.

Mahā-mantra—*See* Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra.

Mahānta—*(conventional usages)* (1) proprietor of a temple; (2) institutional head of a *maṭha; (ontological usage)* (3) the guru manifested as a great Vaiṣṇava, as distinguished from *caitya*-guru, the Lord in the heart, the other aspect of guru-*tattva* (see SB 11.29.6).

Mahāprabhu—*See* Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Mahā-puruṣa—*See* Mahājana.

Mahārāja—"great king"; (1) a title and term of address for a king; (2) a term of address for a sannyasi or saint; (3) used in conjunction with *guru* to accentuate the absolute majestry of the spiritual master; (4) a title and term of address for a *brāhmaṇa* cook.

Mahāśaya—venerable person (generally used as a title or mode of address).

Mahātmā—"great soul" (generally refers to a particularly venerable sadhu, or used as a title or mode of address for a venerable sadhu).

Mahotsava—festival.

Mālā—(1) garland, string of beads, necklace, rosary; (2) 108 recitations of the *mahā-mantra,* counted on a string of 108 beads.

Mālpuyā—a succulent sweet preparation, standard in Gauḍīya festivals, consisting of sweetened rice-flour puris soaked in thick sugar syrup. (ISKCON-style *mālpuyās* are usually soaked in thick sweet yogurt, and are referred to according to their Hindi name, *malpura.*)

Maṇḍala—(1) area; (2) surrounding district or territory.

Mandira—(1) *(primary usage)* temple; (2) any building or residence.

Maṅgala-ārati—the first *ārati* of the day, performed before dawn.

Maṅgalācaraṇa—a prayer to invoke auspiciousness at the beginning of an undertaking, by praising the Supreme Lord and His intimate devotees and seeking their blessings. Particularly (a) a recital before a formal religious talk, or (b) a poetic invocation preceding a written work.

Mañjarī(s)—the class, or a member thereof, of pre-pubescent female assistants to the principal *gopīs* in their service to Śrī Rādha-Kṛṣṇa.

Mano-'bhīṣṭa—the yearning (*abhīṣṭa*) of the heart (*manas*).

Mantra—a Vedic utterance that delivers the mind from illusion.

Mārga—path, way, method.

Mārjana—cleaning, purification.

Marwaris—a class of people originating in Marwar, Rajasthan, and now spread throughout India. Many are merchants, and their establishments dominate bazars in numerous Indian towns. Traditionally pious and inclined to give charity for religious causes, Marwaris were among the principal donors to Gauḍīya Maṭha activities, especially in Calcutta, where they comprised a significant community.

Maṭha— (1) a temple with an attached ashram for *brahmacārīs* and sannyasis; (2) monastery; (3) (*cap*) Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, or Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, or a branch thereof. *See also* **Ākhḍā.**

Maṭha-rakṣaka—"protector of the *maṭha,*" the devotee in charge of a particular Gauḍīya Maṭha. Usually rendered in English as "secretary" of a particular Gauḍīya Maṭha.

Maṭha-vāsī—a resident of a *maṭha.*

Mathurā—the sacred place where Lord Kṛṣṇa took birth and later returned to after performing childhood pastimes in Vṛṇdāvana. Today its extrinsic manifestation is a large town of the same name in Uttar Pradesh.

Mauna—silence, especially when adopted as a religious observance.

Māyā—"illusion"; (1) *(cap)* the personality of the Supreme Lord's material deluding potency; (2) *(lc)* illusion; forgetfulness of one's eternal relationship as servant of Kṛṣṇa. *See also* **Durgā**.

Māyāpur—the place within Navadvīpa-*dhāma* where Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared. According to modern political considerations it is presently in Nadia District, West Bengal.

Māyāvāda—(1) the philosphical thesis of absolute identity between *jīva* and Brahman, Brahman being considered formless and impersonal or void; (2) monism; (3) *(Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava usage)* in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and subsequent texts, it denotes the philosophy propagated by Ādi-Śaṅkarācārya (which among non-Gauḍiyās is generally known as *kevalādvaita-vāda* or *advaita-vāda*); (4) *(non-Gauḍīya usage)* a particular interpretation of *kevalādvaita-vāda. See also* **Ādi-Śaṅkarācārya.**

Māyāvādī—an adherent of Māyāvāda.

Mellow—Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's English rendition of the Sanskrit word *rasa.*

Mleccha—(1) barbarian; (2) a person outside Vedic culture, who does not follow Vedic principles.

Modes of material nature—*See* **Guṇa.**

Mokṣa—liberation from material existence, the cycle of birth and death. *See also* **Dharma-artha-kāma-mokṣa**.

Mṛdaṅga—a two-headed ellipsoidal drum used to accompany *kīrtana.*

Mukti—liberation, especially from the bondage of material existence (thus often used as a synonym for *mokṣa*).

Mukunda—a name of Kṛṣṇa meaning "bestower of liberation."

Mūla— (1) root, basis, foundation, cause, origin; (2) an original text (as distinguished from its translation or commentary).

Muni—a sage or ascetic.

Murāri Gupta—a contemporaneous associate of Lord Caitanya.

Nadia—the district of Bengal in which Navadvīpa is situated.

Nāgara—enjoyer, lady's man.

Nagara-saṅkīrtana—public congregational chanting of the Supreme Lord's holy names, usually on the streets of a city, town, or village. *See also* **Saṅkīrtana.**

Naiṣṭhika-brahmacārī—a lifelong celibate who never wastes his vital bodily fluids but sublimates sexual energy for transcendental purposes.

Nāma—"name"; *(Gauḍīya usage)* especially indicates the holy names of Kṛṣṇa.

Nāmābhāsa—(1) *(higher level)* a stage of chanting the holy names in which offenses are ceasing, and the platform of pure chanting is being approached; the chanter of the holy name has initial faith but also some desire for material pleasure or liberation, and is not knowledgable about the respective roles of the *jīva,* Bhagavān, and *māyā,* nor of *bhakti-tattva;* (2) *(lower level)* (as described in SB 6.2.14) chanting of the holy name by a person who has no faith in Kṛṣṇa, either as a coincidence (to indicate something else), in jest, derisively, or neglectfully. For further discussion, see Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *Harināma-cintāmaṇi,* chap. 3.

Nāmācārya—"*ācārya* of the chanting of the holy names"; an epithet for Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

Nāma-haṭṭa—"marketplace *(figurative)* of the holy name," conceived by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura as the initial preaching organization of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, it has become a blueprint for ongoing grassroots propagation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Nāmāparādha—(1) offense against the holy name; (2) offensive chanting of the holy name. *See also* **Harināma.**

Nāmī—the personage of the holy name.

Nandana—son.

Nārada-pañcarātra—the scripture revealed by Nārada Muni that, among other topics, delineates the recommended process of deity worship for Kali-yuga. *See also* **Pañcarātra.**

Nārāyaṇa—*See* Viṣnu.

(Śrīla) Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura— (c. 1550–1611) a great *ācārya* whose poems and songs encapsulate the essence of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma.

Nāṭya-mandira—"temple for drama and dancing." Common in Bengali temples in front of the main shrine, it is a roofed pavilion open on four sides, within which people have *darśana* of the deities, perform *kīrtana,* and dance in glorification of the Lord. In colloquial Bengali, the term is rendered *nāṭa-mandira.*

Navadvīpa—(1) Navadvīpa-*maṇḍala* or Navadvīpa-*dhāma;* (2) the present town of Navadvīpa, West Bengal. *See also* **Kuliyā.**

Navadvīpa-dhāma, Navadvīpa-maṇḍala—the sacred area conceived of as comprising nine (*nava*) islands (*dvīpa*), within one of which Māyāpur is situated, and within another the present town of Navadvīpa.

Navadvīpa-dhāma-pracāriṇī Sabhā—an organization founded in 1893 by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and his associates. Its objectives are described in vol. 1, p. 363.

Nimāi (Paṇḍita)—a pre-*sannyāsa* name of Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Nine main processes of bhakti—*śravaṇa* (hearing), *kīrtana* (chanting), *smaraṇa* (remembrance), *pāda-sevana* (serving the lotus feet), *arcana* (deity worship), *vandana* (praising, praying), *dāsya* (self-identification as a servant), *sakhya* (self-identification as a friend), *ātma-nivedana* (self-surrender). (From *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.5.23)

Nirjala-vrata—the vow to undertake total fasting, even from water.

Nirjana-bhajana—solitary *bhajana.*

Nirviśeṣa—"without attributes." (*Nir*—without; *viśeṣa*—attributes)

Nirviśeṣa-vāda—the doctrine of the unspecifiedness of the Absolute Truth. Often used as a synonym for Māyāvāda, which technically is but one genre of *nirviśeṣa-vāda.*

Niṣkiñcana—possessionless. A synonym of *akiñcana.*

Nitāi—diminutive of *Nityānanda. See also* **Nityānanda.**

Nitya—eternal.

(Lord) Nityānanda (Prabhu)—the avatar of Lord Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa's expansion as His own brother, who appeared as the foremost associate of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Nitya-siddha—an eternally perfect person, one who has never forgotten Kṛṣṇa.

Non-malefic mercy—*(Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's translation of* amandodayā dayā, *culled from* Śrī Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭaka *8.10 and quoted as Cc 2.10.119)* welfare acts without harmful effects. For Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's explanation of this term, see his commentary on Cc 2.10.119.

North India—especially refers to the belt where principally Hindi and related languages are spoken, but more broadly includes the entire country (except the northeast region) north of the modern states Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu.

Nṛsiṁha(-deva)—the half-man, half-lion avatar of Lord Viṣṇu.

Orissa—an ancient region and current state of eastern India. In 1912, much of that Oriya-speaking area was incorporated within the Province of Bihar and Orissa, in 1936 was separately formed as the Province of Orissa, and in 1950 was expanded to include several former princely states and reconstituted as the present state.

Oriya—(1) of or pertaining to Orissa; (2) the language or people of Orissa.

Padāvalī—"poetry," particularly Gauḍīya poetry describing the forms, qualities, and especially the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and Lord Caitanya.

Padāvalī-kīrtana—traditional Bengali verse-format *līlā-kīrtana.*

Pallī—neighborhood.

Pālya-dāsī—one of a class of *gopīs* whose members perform most intimate service to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

Pan—(1) betel leaf; (2) a mildly intoxicating masticatory of betel nut, lime, and often spices, all wrapped in a betel leaf.

Pañcarātra—a class of scriptures, venerated particularly by Vaiṣṇavas, describing deity worship, ritual, and procedures. *See also* **Nārada-pañcarātra.**

Pāñcarātrika, pāñcarātrikī—of, according to, or pursuant to *Pañcarātra.*

Pañca-tattva—"five principles"; Lord Kṛṣṇa as *bhakta-rūpa,* the form of a devotee, Lord Caitanya; *sva-rūpaka,* the expansion of a devotee, Lord Nityānanda; *bhakta-avatāra,* the descent of a devotee, Advaita Ācārya; *bhakta-śakti,* the energies of Kṛṣṇa, headed and represented by Gadādhara Paṇḍita; and *bhakta-ākhya,* those known as devotees, headed and represented by Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura. (See Cc 1.1.14)

Pāṇḍā—(1) a *brāhmaṇa* residing in a place of pilgrimage and performing diverse functions, such as temple priest or cook, bequeathed via hereditary right. Many *pāṇḍās* function as guides who direct pilgrims to the various sites in a holy place and help them perform rituals thereat.

Paṇḍita— (1) a scholar, particularly of Vedic knowledge; (2) an often undeserved epithet for a member of the *brāhmaṇa* caste, descendants of whom are expected to be learned in Vedic knowledge; (3) a title, affixed to the beginning or end of a name, that generally signifies the bearer to be an accomplished scholar, but may merely indicate his belonging to the *brāhmaṇa* caste.

Pāñjābī—*(Bengali)* a long loosely-fitting shirt.

Para-duḥkha-duḥkhī—a person unhappy at others' distress.

Parama-guru—the guru of one's guru.

Paramahaṁsa—a self-realized saint, completely beyond the influence of material nature. In Vaiṣṇava usage, this word applies only to a topmost Vaiṣṇava, for only a superlative devotee can be truly self-realized and beyond the influence of material nature.

Paramārtha—highest goal, whole truth, spiritual knowledge.

Paramārthī—(1) one dedicated to *paramārtha;* (2) the name of the Gauḍīya Mission's Oriya periodical.

Pāramārthika—of or relating to *paramārtha.*

Paramātmā—a name of Kṛṣṇa meaning "the Supreme Soul"; also known as *antaryāmī* (indweller). It usually indicates the localized Viṣṇu expansion of Kṛṣṇa pervading material nature and residing in the heart of each embodied living entity and every atom.

Paramparā—succession. *See also* Guru-*paramparā.*

Paraśurāma—the Viṣṇu-avatar who killed innumerable demonic *kṣatriyas* with his ax.

Para-upakāra—activities meant for the ultimate benefit of others.

Parikramā—circumambulation, particularly of temples and holy places.

Pariṣad—assembly, meeting, association, council.

Pastime(s)—*līlā* (q.v.).

Patañjali—the ancient author of the system of meditative yoga that aims at impersonal liberation.

Phala-śruti—"promise of success"; benedictions appended to the end of a scriptural passage or prayer that are bestowed upon whoever attentively and faithfully recites, hears, or reads the content.

Phalgu—small, feeble, weak, unsubstantial, insignificant, worthless, unprofitable, useless.

Prabhu—*(lowercase)* (1) master; *(capital)* (1) the Supreme Lord; (2) a respectful appellation for devotees.

Prabhupāda—(1) "whose position is representative of Prabhu (the Supreme Lord)"; (2) "at the lotus feet of Prabhu"; (3) "at whose lotus feet are many masters (i.e., Vaiṣṇavas)"; an honorific title used to designate or address an *ācārya. See also* **Śrīla Prabhupāda.**

Pracāra—preaching, propagation.

Pracāraka—preacher, propagator.

Pradarśanī—an exhibition.

Prākṛta—material, mundane.

Prākṛta-sahajiyā—an aberrant performer of devotional activities who neglects prescribed regulations and whose philosophical understanding is deviant.

Praṇāma-mantra—a formal prayer expressing respect.

Prapanna—one who has submitted himself or surrendered.

Prapannāśrama—(1) the generic name given by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura to Vaiṣṇava centers he established; (2) the name of some Gauḍīya Maṭha branches.

Prārthanā—a collection of devotional songs by Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura.

Prasāda—"mercy." Conventionally refers to food or other items received as mercy from the Supreme Lord after being offered in *arcana,* or similar items received from high-level devotees.

Prayāga—the Purāṇic and still commonly used name for Allahabad.

Prayojana—necessity, aim, objective; *(Gauḍīya usage)* the ultimate goal of life, namely to develop love of Godhead. *See also* **Abhidheya; Sambandha.**

Prema—transcendental love.

Prema-bhakti-candrikā—a collection of devotional songs by Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura.

Prema-vivarta—"transformations of love"; the name of a book ascribed to Śrī Jagadānanda Paṇḍita, an intimate associate of Lord Caitanya.

Premī—a devotee who has *prema. See also* **Rasika.**

Preta—a type of ghost that remains interminably hungry yet has no means for eating.

Pūjā—(1) (a) formal worship; (b) such worship conducted as part of the *arcana* system; (2) a festival connected with a particular *pūjā*—Durgā-*pūjā,* Govardhana-*pūjā,* etc. *See also* **Arcana.**

Pūjala rāga-patha— "They worshiped on the spontaneous path," from a poem by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī that captures the tenor of his mission. (See vol 1, p. 93)

Pūjārī—"one who performs *pūjā*"; a *brāhmaṇa* who worships the Lord's deity form. *See also* **Arcana.**

Puṇya—piety, pious deeds.

Puṇya-karma—scripturally ordained pious activities.

Purāṇa—a historical supplement to the Vedas. There are eighteen principal *Purāṇas.*

Pure devotee—*See* Śuddha-bhakta.

Pure devotional service—*See* Śuddha-bhakti.

Purī—(1) the holy place in Orissa that is the principal abode of Lord Jagannātha; (2) a *sannyāsa* title.

Pūrṇimā—full-moon day.

Puruṣottama—a name of Kṛṣṇa meaning "the supreme male."

Puruṣottama-dhāma or **-kṣetra**—a name of Purī and the surrounding area.

Puruṣottama Maṭha—a Gauḍīya Maṭha branch established by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura at Purī.

Puruṣottama-vrata—special vows followed during the sacred intercalary month of Puruṣottama.

Puṣpa-samādhi—a memorial for a departed *paramahaṁsa* Vaiṣṇava established by entombing some flowers from his original *samādhi,* and considered a replica of and as venerable as the original. *See also* **Samādhi.**

(Śrī, Śrīmatī) Rādhā, Rādhārāṇī, Rādhikā—Lord Kṛṣṇa's internal potency and most intimate consort.

Rādhā-kuṇḍa—the bathing place of and nondifferent from Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, ascertained by Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas to be the most sacred location in all existence, the quintessence of all holy places.

Rādhāṣṭamī—the appearance day of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

Rāga—(1) *(Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava usage)* spontaneous intense loving attachment to Kṛṣṇa not governed by scriptural regulations, characteristic of the original inhabitants of Vṛndāvana; (2) a musical mode.

Rāga-mārga, Rāgānuga-bhakti, Rāga-patha—the path of following *rāgātmika-bhaktas* to cultivate love of Kṛṣṇa in intimate exchange.

Rāgātmika— composed of or characterized by *rāga*.

(Śrīla) Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī—(1506–1580) one of the Six Gosvāmīs, and famous for reciting *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

(Śrīla) Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī—(1495–1571) one of the Six Gosvāmīs, and known as the *prayojana-ācārya.*

Rākṣasa—(1) a powerful race of cannibals, usually possessed of mystic powers; (2) anyone of highly sinful mentality.

Rāma—"pleasant", "charming"; a prominent name of Viṣṇu. It particularly refers to the Viṣṇu-avatar Rāmacandra, who appeared in Tretā-yuga as the ideal king.

Rāmacandra—*See* Rāma.

(Śrīla) Rāmānanda Rāya—one of the most intimate associates of Lord Caitanya during His pastimes in Purī.

(Śrī, Śrīpāda) Rāmānuja, Rāmānujācārya—the powerful eleventh-century *ācārya* of the Śrī *sampradāya* who preached the philosophy of *viśiṣṭādvaita* (qualified oneness).

Rāmāyaṇa—the epic narration of Lord Rāmacandra's pastimes.

Rasa—taste, or mellow, of a relationship, particularly in regard to Kṛṣṇa. As explained by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu,* the five main *rasas* are *śānta* (neutrality), *dāsya* (servitude), *sakhya* (friendship), *vātsalya* (parental love), and *mādhurya* (amatory love).

Rasābhāsa—contradictory and distasteful overlapping of one *rasa* with another.

Rasagullā—a particular type of sweetball made from milk curd.

Rāsa(-līlā)—the circular dance of Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs,* the most celebrated of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes (described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* Tenth Canto, chapters twenty-nine through thirty-three).

Rasa-śāstra—a treatise concerning *rasa.*

Rāsa-sthalī—a site of *rāsa-līlā.* There are several within Vraja-*maṇḍala,* of which the most prominent (being the venue of the *mahā-rāsa* performed during Kārtika) is the site of the Rādhā-Govinda temple within the present town of Vrindaban.

Rasika—a person absorbed in the mellows of *rasa,* especially *gopī-rasa.* Refers to both devotees and the Supreme Lord.

Ratha-yātrā—the annual festival in Purī and other places for pulling the deities of Lord Jagannātha, Lord Balarāma, and Subhadrā-devī in procession on huge decorated canopied chariots.

Rāvaṇa— the *rākṣasa* king who was the chief foe of Lord Rāmacandra and ultimately was killed by Him.

Ḥṣi—(1) a sage; (2) *(original meaning)* a sage with transcendental ability to perceive and transmit nonextant Vedic mantras.

(Śrīla) Rūpa Gosvāmī—(1489–1564) the foremost of the Six Gosvāmīs, and known as the *rasācārya.*

Rūpānuga—a discipular follower of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

Rūpa-Raghunātha—Rūpa Gosvāmī and Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī. As the two among the Six Gosvāmīs whose writings particularly reveal the topmost *rasa* that is the essence of and worshipable goal in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma, their names are often clubbed together to indicate that essence and goal.

Sabhā—assembly, council.

Saccidānanda—*(lowercase)* "possessed of eternity (*sat*), knowledge (*cit*), and bliss (*ānanda*)"; attributes of the Supreme Lord and liberated devotees; *(capital)* (1) a name of Lord Viṣṇu, (2) a name of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

Śacīdevī, Śacīmātā—the mother of Lord Caitanya.

Śacīnandana—a name of Lord Caitanya meaning "the son of Śacī."

Sadācāra—adherence to scriptural rules governing proper behavior. *See also* **Ācāra.**

Sādhaka—a practitioner of *sādhana.*

Sādhana—(1) means for attaining a spiritual or religious goal; (2) regulated spiritual practice.

Sādhana-bhakti—(1) devotional service executed by practicing a regulative process meant to invoke one's dormant Kṛṣṇa consciousness; (2) *vaidhī bhakti* (q.v.).

Sadhu—(Sanskrit: *sādhu)* (1) a saintly person, especially a renunciant; (2) a devotee of Kṛṣṇa, especially a renunciant or pure devotee; (3) a Hindu holy man.

Sādhu-śāstra-guru—(from *Prema-bhakti-candrikā*) the threefold authoritative source of knowledge. The word *sādhu* used herein refers principally to recognized previous *ācāryas* and to present advanced devotees.

Sādhya—the goal, or desired attainment, of a particular *sādhana.*

Sāgara—ocean.

Sahajiyā—*See* Prākṛta-sahajiyā.

Sāhitya— literature.

Śaiva—"in relation to Lord Śiva"; *(particularly)* a worshiper of Lord Śiva.

Sajjana-toṣaṇī—the Vaiṣṇava magazine started by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and continued by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. (*Sajjana*—God's devotee; *toṣaṇī*—who gives satisfaction to)

Sakhī—"female friend"; *(Gauḍīya usage)* an intimate handmaid of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

Sakhya—friendship. *See also* **Rasa.**

Śākta—one who worships material energy, in her forms such as Kālī or Durgā, as the supreme reality.

Śakti—(1) energy, potency; (2) the personality of an energy or potency, e.g., Rādhā, Durgā.

Śaktyāveśa-avatāra—a person endowed by the Supreme Lord with special potency to carry out a particular mission.

Śālagrāma-śilā—Lord Viṣṇu in the form of particular stones.

Samādhi—(1) the perfected state of spiritual trance; (2) tomb of a departed saint, especially a *paramahaṁsa* Vaiṣṇava.

Samāj—(Sanskrit: *samāja)* society, association.

Samājī—a member of a *samāj.*

Sambandha—relationship. In Gauḍīya theology, *sambandha-jñāna* (knowledge of one's existential position in relationship to the Supreme and everything else that be) is considered the first of three divisions of Vedic knowledge. The other two are *abhidheya* (q.v.) and *prayojana* (q.v.).

Sambandha-jñāna—knowledge of the mutual relationship between the Supreme Lord and His energies.

Sammilanī—convention, meeting.

Sampradāya—a sect of spiritual practitioners maintained by the principle of preceptorial succession and distinguished by a unique philosophical position.

Saṁsāra—(1) material existence; (2) the cycle of birth and death; (3) family life.

Saṁskāra—a purificatory rite.

Saṁskāra-dīpikā—the booklet of ceremonies and rituals for Gauḍīya renunciants compiled by Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī as a supplement to his *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā.*

(Śrīla) Sanātana Gosvāmī— (1488–1558) one of the Six Gosvāmīs. He was entrusted by

Lord Caitanya to delineate the principles of *vaidhī bhakti,* the relationship between *vaidhī bhakti* and *rāgānuga-bhakti,* and the subtle truths for ascertaining the differences between manifest and unmanifest Gokula.

Sanātana-śikṣā—Lord Caitanya's systematic instruction to Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī (detailed in Cc 2.20–24).

Saṅga—association (with persons, objects, or conceptions).

Saṅgha—a formal association, establishment, or institution.

Śaṅkara, Śaṅkarācārya—(686–718) an avatar of Lord Śiva who established Māyāvāda in the modern age. *See also* **Ādi-Śaṅkarācārya.**

Saṅkīrtana—congregational chanting of the Supreme Lord's holy names. *See also* **Kīrtana; Nagara-saṅkīrtana.**

Sannyāsa—celibate renounced life, the fourth *āśrama* of the Vedic social system. *See also* **Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Śānta-rasa—the mellow of neutral admiration. *See also* **Rasa.**

Sāragrāhī—"one who appreciates merit or worth"; one who enters into the spirit of something; one who accepts the essence of reality. (*Sāra*—essence; *grāhī*—one who accepts)

Śaraṇāgati—(1) "approach for protection," the path of surrender to the Lord; (2) a collection of songs by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura outlining that path.

Sārasvata—in relation to Sarasvatī.

Sarasvatī—(1) (a) the goddess of learning; (b) the same goddess in the form of a river (several rivers bear this name, including one that flows through Māyāpur, where she is popularly known as Jalāṅgī; (2) a title for a scholar, indicating that he has received the grace of Goddess Sarasvatī.

Sarovara—lake.

Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya—a contemporaneous associate of Lord Caitanya.

Śāstra—(1) revealed scripture; (2) the four Vedas and literature in pursuance of the Vedic version.

Śāstrī—(1) a scholar, particularly of Vedic knowledge; *paṇḍita* (q.v.) (2) a title, generally affixed to the end of a name, for an accomplished scholar; (3) a *brāhmaṇa* surname.

Śāstric *(anglicization)*—scriptural.

Śāstrīya—scriptural.

Sat— correct, proper, good, genuine, eternal, existing, wise, true.

Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā—the book of ceremonies and rituals for Gauḍīya householders compiled by Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī.

Ṣaṭ-sandarbha—"six treatises"; a series of works by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī that systematically present and establish Gauḍīya philosophy.

Sattva—(1) goodness, purity; (2) existence, essence, existential condition; (3) *(Vaiṣṇava usage)* the pristine condition of the pure soul, overflowing with loving feelings for Kṛṣṇa.

Sāttvika—(1) characterized by the mode of goodness *(sattva)*; (2) related to existence. *See also* **Modes of material nature.**

Sātvata—a synonym of *Vaiṣṇava* (q.v.).

Satya—truth.

Satya-yuga—the first in the universal cycle of four ages, characterized by proper and complete maintenance of the principles of dharma.

Sevā—service. In Vaiṣṇava usage it refers particularly to service offered voluntarily and selflessly to Bhagavān and His devotees. *See also* **Devotional service.**

Sevonmukha—"inclined to service." It usually indicates the inclination of a devotee to serve the Supreme Lord and His pure representatives. *See also* **Devotional service.**

Siddha—(1) perfect; (2) a consummate saint. It is often used as a title for a perfected saint or one thus considered. *See also* **Nitya-siddha.**

Siddhānta—(1) the ultimate conclusion of any philosophical proposal or system; (2) an established textbook of Vedic astronomy; (3) the branch of astronomy giving mathematical basis to stellar observations.

Siddha-praṇālī—(1) a process whereby one envisions himself in his (real or supposed) eternal spiritual identity; (2) *sādhana* (a process leading to perfection); (3) the path practiced and shown by perfect devotees; (4) the preceptorial line of perfect devotees.* (*Praṇālī*—method, procedure, channel)

Siddha-svarūpa—the eternal form of a perfect devotee in Kṛṣṇa-*līlā*.

Siddhi—(1) perfection; (2) the perfectional stage; (3) mystical achievement.

Śikhā—symbolic tuft of hair on the pate, traditionally obligatory for most male members of Vedic society.

Śikṣā— (1) training, education, instruction; (2) the section of Sanskrit studies dealing with pronunciation.

Śikṣā-guru—an instructing guru.

Śikṣāṣṭaka—the eight verses composed by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu expressing the quintessence of Vaiṣṇava philosophy.

Śilā—stone. *See also* **Govardhana-śilā; Śālagrāma-śilā.**

Śiṣya—(feminine: *śiṣyā*) a disciple.

Sītā—the eternal consort of Lord Rāmacandra.

Śiva—the demigod in charge of the mode of ignorance and destruction of the material manifestation, and also famous as the protector of Vṛndāvana-*dhāma* and as the best of Vaiṣṇavas (*vaiṣṇavānāṁ yathā śambhuḥ— Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 12.13.16).

Six Gosvāmīs (of Vṛndāvana)—Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, and Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, the principal renunciant followers of Lord Caitanya who on His order resided in Vṛndāvana and wrote many important books. After Caitanya Mahāprabhu departed this world, they became the leaders of the Gauḍīya community. *See also the individual names.*

Śloka—a Sanskrit verse, particularly one in the meter *anuṣṭubh,* and usually from a recognized scripture or text.

Smaraṇa—remembrance, contemplation.

Smārta—"follower of *smṛti.*" It generally refers to an adherent of *smārta-vāda,* the belief that by fastidiously following *smṛti* regulations one can enjoy the results of pious activities, gradually qualify to be reborn within the *brāhmaṇa* caste and be elevated to the platform of *jñāna,* and finally achieve *mukti.* This materialistic understanding of Vedic dharma is opposed to Vaiṣṇava dharma.

Smārta-brāhmaṇas—*brāhmaṇa* adherents of *smārta-vāda.*

Smṛti—(a) Vedic texts subsequent to *śruti* and, unlike *śruti,* handed down in writing; (b) one of several compilations of civil and criminal laws and codes of behavior for followers of Vedic culture. *See also* **Śāstra; Śruti.**

South India—a cultural bloc distinct from North India, it basically comprises the modern states Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu.

Spiritual master—guru.

Śraddhā—faith.

Śrāddha— a ceremony for the benefit of departed forefathers.

Śrauta—that which is heard in discipular succession and is according to the Vedas.

Śrī—"opulence" or "possessed of opulence"; (1) an epithet for Rādhārāṇī and Lakṣmī; (2) a term, usually prepositive, to denote respect for a person or a sacred book, place, or other object.

Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha—(1) an embellished mode of reference to the Gauḍīya Maṭha institution; (2) the original Gauḍīya Maṭha, in Calcutta.

Śrīla—an honorific prefix to names of exalted devotees.

Śrīla Prabhupāda—*(in this book, refers to)* (1) Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda; (2) His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam—the topmost *Purāṇa,* composed by Śrīla Vyāsadeva to present confidential and definitive understanding of Lord Kṛṣṇa, His devotees, and pure devotional service to Him. Also known as the *Bhāgavata* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa.*

Śrīmatī—(1) feminine form of the honorific address Śrī; (2) an epithet of Rādhārāṇī.

Śrīpāṭa—place of the appearance or *bhajana* of a great Vaiṣṇava.

Śrī sampradāya—succession originating from Lakṣmī, of which the prominent *ācārya* in the current age is Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya.

Śrī Vaiṣṇava—devotee in the Śrī *sampradāya.*

Śrīvāsa (Paṇḍita, Ṭhākura)—a contemporaneous associate of Lord Caitanya.

Śrīvāsa Aṅgana—(1) the site in Māyāpur of Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura's home; (2) the temple established thereat by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Śṛṅgāra—amatory love.

Śruti—"what has been heard"; (1) sound; (2) the Veda, sacred knowledge in the form of eternal sounds or words, heard or communicated from the beginning of creation and transmitted orally by *brāhmaṇas* from generation to generation; considered the original and thus most

authoritative section of *śāstra,* having precedence over *smṛti. See also* **Śāstra; Smṛti.**

Sthalī—place.

Sthāna—place, abode, position.

Sudarśana—the disk weapon of Lord Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa.

Śuddha—pure.

Śuddha-bhakta— devotee free from desires other than to please Kṛṣṇa through pure devotional service.

Śuddha-bhakti—devotional service performed solely for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa, uncontaminated by any other motive. (See explanation in vol. 1, p. 283)

Śuddha-nāma—pure chanting of the holy names, i.e., free from offenses, personal motives, and misconceptions. *See also* **Nāmābhāsa; Nāmāparādha.**

Śūdra—(1) laborer or artisan; (2) the fourth occupational division of the Vedic social system. *See also* **Varṇa; Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Śukadeva Gosvāmī—the son of Śrīla Vyāsadeva and the original speaker of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in its present form.

Sukha—happiness.

Supersoul—*See* Paramātmā.

Supreme Personality of Go dhead—Kṛṣṇa (God), the supreme creator, maintainer, and controller of all that be.

Surrender—*(in Vaiṣṇava parlance)* full submission (of oneself as a servant of guru and Bhagavān).

Sūtra—(1) a thread (including the sacred thread worn by higher-caste men); (2) an aphorism, especially one considered to be definitive or an irreducible rule; (3) a work consisting of such aphorisms.

Svāmī—*See* Gosvāmī.

Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja—"the grove that gives the happiness of one's own bliss;" Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's place of *bhajana* and residence in Godrumadvīpa, Navadvīpa-*dhāma.*

Svarga—heaven. Described in Vedic literature, it is inhabited by persons who by *puṇya-*

karma attain the status of demigods, enabling them to enjoy paradisiac delights for several thousand years by earthly calculation. *Svarga* differs from Abrahamic ideations of heaven inasmuch as it is not the abode of the Supreme Lord, nor is residence there eternal.

Svarūpa—"own form"; (1) the eternal form of the Supreme Lord; (2) the eternal form intrinsic to a specific *jīva;* (3) intrinsic spiritual nature.

(Śrīla) Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī—the personal secretary and intimate confidant of Lord Caitanya during His pastimes in Purī.

Svarūpa-śakti—internal or intrinsic potency.

Svarupganj—the terrestrial name for a village in the area corresponding to that which by spiritual vision is perceived as Godrumadvīpa, within Navadvīpa-*dhāma;* therein Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja is situated.

Śyāmānandī— (1) a discipular follower of Śyāmānanda Prabhu, a great sixteenth-century Gauḍīya preacher; (2) the sect within the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* comprising such followers. (See vol. 1, p. 44, fn *)

Tāmasic—characterized by the mode of ignorance (*tamas*). *See also* **Modes of material nature.**

Tantra—a genre of texts that describe esoteric practices of some Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain sects, and include theology, rituals, yoga, and construction of temples and images, and encompass the Vaiṣṇava *saṁhitās,* Śaiva *āgama*s, and Śākta tantras (which deal with spells, rituals, and mystic symbols). Among these, only the Vaiṣṇava- or Sātvata-tantras are Vedic.

Tantric—(1) of or relating to tantra; (2) a practitioner of tantrism.

Tantrism—practices based on tantra. It is generally identified with rituals of the "left-hand" Śākta system, including ritual copulation and black magic, but also correctly refers to the more staid practices of various mainstream Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain sects.

Tattva—(1) metaphysical principle; (2) philosophical topic, particularly as described in Vedic scripture and elucidated by *ācāryas.*

Ṭhākura—a title designating a Vaiṣṇava situated on the topmost level of devotional service. *See also* **Paramahaṁsa.**

Ṭīkā—commentary on scripture, especially a commentary on or based on a *bhāṣya* (q.v.).

Tilaka—auspicious clay-markings on the upper part of the body, principally the forehead. The design varies according to, and thus indicates, one's *sampradāya.*

Timiṅgila—(described in Vedic literature) an aquatic that preys on whales.

Tirobhāva—Vaiṣṇava terminology for the apparent demise of a Viṣṇu-avatar or an exalted devotee, in contradistinction to the death of conditioned souls as per the law of karma. Rendered in English as *disappearance,* for rather than ceasing to exist, such eternal personages simply become indiscernable to mortal vision, like the disappearance of the sun upon setting.

Tirobhāva-tithi—the anniversary day of the disappearance of an exalted devotee or Viṣṇu-avatar. *See also* **Āvirbhāva-tithi; Tithi.**

Tīrtha—(1) a holy place, person, or object; (2) a *sannyāsa* title (one of ten awarded to sannyasis of the Śaṅkara *sampradāya,* one of a hundred and eight awarded to Gauḍīya sannyasis, and the only title awarded to Mādhva sannyasis).

Tithi— lunar day. In Vedic culture, important events such as the appearance or disappearance of exalted personages are recorded and celebrated according to the corresponding *tithi.*

Ṭoṭā-gopīnātha—(1) the particular deity of Gopīnātha situated in Purī and previously served by Gadādhara Paṇḍita; (2) the temple of this deity. (*Ṭoṭā* [Oriya]—grove.)

Tretā-yuga—the second in the universal cycle of four ages, characterized by a one-fourth decrease in *dharmika* principles from the preceding age, Satya-yuga (q.v.).

Tridaṇḍa—the symbolic staff composed of three (*tri*) bamboo rods carried by Vaiṣṇava sannyasis of the Gauḍīya and Śrī *sampradāyas.* The Gauḍīya *tridaṇḍa* actually has four sticks. (See Cc 2.3.6, commentary) *See also* **Daṇḍa.**

Tridaṇḍī—a Vaiṣṇava sannyasi who carries a *tridaṇḍa.*

Tṛṇād api sunīcatā—"the state of being lower than grass"; considering oneself very low; utter humility. This phrase is derived from *tṛṇād api sunīcena* (q.v.).

Tṛṇād api sunīcena—"by one who considers himself lower than grass"; the first words of an oft-quoted verse by Lord Caitanya recommending utter humility. The full verse with translation appears in vol. 2, p. 220.

Tulasī—(1) the sacred plant most dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa, and thus worshiped by the Lord's devotees; (2) (in her original form) a *gopī* of Vṛndāvana. Both neckbeads (*kaṇṭhi-mālā*) and chanting beads (*japa-mālā*) made from *tulasī* wood are necessary paraphernalia for Gauḍīyas. For offering *bhoga* to Lord Viṣṇu, *tulasī* leaves are essential, as He does not accept any offering sans *tulasī* leaves.

Uddīpana—item that stimulates remembrance of and love for Kṛṣṇa—e.g., Śrī Kṛṣṇa's qualities and activities, His mode of decoration, the way His hair is arranged, His smile, bodily

fragrance, flute, bugle, ankle-bells, conch, foot-impressions, and places of pastimes, Tulasī, the Vaiṣṇavas, Ekādaśī, etc. (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 2.1.301–2).

United Provinces—(full name: United Provinces of Agra and Oudh) a major administrative area of northern British India. It corresponded approximately to the present-day states of Uttar Pradesh (also abbreviated as U.P.) and Uttarkhand.

Untouchable—(Sanskrit: *aspṛśya*) (1) an object or person considered defiling if contacted by touch; (2) outcaste, the broad class (beneath all Hindu castes) whose members are shunned because of their low birth and the unclean habits and professions allotted them.

U.P.—*see* **United Provinces**

Upanayana—the ceremony whereby one is initiated into the chanting of Brahma-*gāyatrī* and invested with an *upavīta,* thus being endowed by the guru with "second" birth. Traditionally this induction certified the disciple for training in systematic memorization of one or more Vedas. *See also* **Dīkṣā.**

Upaniṣads—philosophical treatises within the Vedas, one hundred and eight of which are considered principal, and the following ten the most important: *Īśa (Iśopaṇiṣad), Kena, Kaṭha, Praśna, Muṇḍaka, Māṇḍūkya, Taittirīya, Aitareya, Chāndogya, Bṛhad-āraṇyaka.* Some add *Śvetāśvatara* and thus designate eleven principal *Upaniṣads*.

Upavīta—"sacred thread"; a loop of cotton strands bestowed upon a male youth in a religious ceremony for (at least ostensibly) inducting him into Vedic study; it was henceforth to be worn at all times, generally over the left shoulder and under the right, and extending diagonally across the torso. Although traditionally also given to *kṣatriyas* and *vaiśyas,* in recent generations it has been the prerogative of *brāhmaṇas,* and thus a status symbol.

Ürja-vrata—*See* Kārtika-vrata.

Uttama—"above ignorance and darkness"; topmost.

Uttama-adhikārī—topmost, fully perfect devotee. *See also* **Paramahaṁsa.**

Vāda—a philosophical theory. In Vedic philosophy it denotes various theories, such as Māyāvāda, *viśiṣṭādvaita-vāda,* etc.

Vādī—*(in conjunction with a qualifying term)* an adherent of a specific *vāda;* e.g., Māyāvādī means an adherent of Māyāvāda.

Vaibhava—might, power, greatness, grandeur, glory, magnificence.

Vaidhī bhakti—the stage of *sādhana* consisting of prescribed regulations meant to gradually

elevate neophyte devotees. *See also* **Sādhana-bhakti.**

Vaikuṇṭha—the spiritual world.

Vairāgī—(1) a mendicant; (2) an epithet for members of the *bābājī* class, many of whom at the time of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī were superficially renounced hypocrites who indulged in illicit sex. *See also* **Bābājī.**

Vairāgya—renunciation, detachment. *See also* **Yukta-vairāgya.**

Vaiṣṇava— (1) a devotee of Viṣṇu (Kṛṣṇa), especially a pure, fully perfect devotee; (2) of or pertaining to a Vaiṣṇava or to Vaiṣṇava dharma.

Vaiṣṇava-aparādha—offense against a Vaiṣṇava. *See also* **Aparādha.**

Vaiṣṇava dharma, Vaiṣṇavism—the cult of worship of Viṣṇu.

Vaiṣṇavī—a female Vaiṣṇava.

Vaiśya—(1) an agriculturist or merchant; (2) the third occupational division of the Vedic social system. *See also* **Varṇa; Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Vallabha—"lover," "husband"; (1) a name of Kṛṣṇa; (2) (also known as Vallabhācārya) a contemporary of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the preceptor of a Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* prominent in western India; (3) the name of the aforesaid *sampradāya.*

Vaṁśa—dynasty.

Vana(m)—forest.

Vānaprastha—(1) a celibate retiree from family life; (2) the third *āśrama* of the Vedic social system. *See also* **Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Vāṇī—words, instructions, message.

Vapu—body, form.

Varṇa—any of the four occupational divisions in the Vedic social system: *brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya,* and *śūdra. See also* **Varṇāśrama-dharma.**

Varṇāśrama-dharma—the Vedic social system of four occupational divisions and four spiritual orders. *See also* **Āśrama; Dharma; Varṇa.**

Vārṣabhānavī—a name for Rādhārāṇī meaning "the daughter of Mahārāja Vṛṣabhānu."

Vāsa—residence; the state of residing in.

Vāsī—resident.

Vātsalya-rasa—**"**mellow of parental affection." *See also* **Rasa.**

Vedānta—"conclusion of Vedic knowledge"; (1) the *Upaniṣads;* (2) the *Vedānta-sūtra* or philosophy thereof.

Vedānta-sūtra—Śrīla Vyāsadeva's aphoristic compendium of the essence of Vedic knowledge.

Vicāra—analysis, consideration, judgment.

Viddha—*(Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's usage)* contaminated.

Vidhi—scripturally ordained regulations.

Vidhi-mārga— the path of *bhakti* governed by adherence to scripturally ordained regulations (and thus distinguished from *rāga-mārga*).

Vidvad-rūḍhi—the meaning (*rūḍhi*) of a word accepted by the learned (*vidvān*); the internal, transcendental meaning of a word. *See also* **Ajña-rūḍhi.**

Vidyā—knowledge.

Vigraha—"form." It often indicates the Supreme Lord in His manifestation as the deity (q.v.).

Vijaya-vigraha—a small deity of a temple who participates in festivals on behalf of the larger deity, who generally remains on the altar. In South India and in ISKCON, this deity is more commonly known by the synonymous term *utsava-vigraha.*

Vilāpa-kusumāñjali—The composition of 104 verses by Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī expressing his desperate separation from Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and craving Her service.

Vilāsa—pastime, sport, appearance, manifestation, charm, shining, beauty.

Vinoda—pleasure.

Vipralambha, **Viraha**—separation (of lovers). Lord Caitanya taught that the most exquisite worship of Kṛṣṇa is in the mood of separation (*viraha-bhāva*); hence this mood is the heart of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava dharma. Devotees in this mortal world also feel *viraha* from devotees departed from it.

Viṣaya—object, concern, sphere, category, etc.

Viṣaya-vigraha—"the form of the object," the object of *prema*, i.e., Kṛṣṇa. *See also* **Āśraya-vigraha.**

Viṣṇu—the Supreme Lord, especially His majestic four-armed forms in Vaikuṇṭha and His expansions for creating and maintaining the material universes.

Viṣṇupriyā—the eternal consort of Lord Caitanya who appeared in His pastimes as His second wife, famous for her strict practice of Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti* after He accepted *sannyāsa*.

Viṣṇusvāmī—the original preceptor of the Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* named after him.

Viśva—universe, universal, earth, world, all, entire, whole.

(Śrīla) Viśvanātha Cakravartī—(seventeenth century) a prominent Gauḍīya *ācārya* best known for writings of his that illuminate *mādhurya-bhāva*.

Viśva-Vaiṣṇava-rāja Sabhā—"universal royal court of Vaiṣṇavas"; the organization founded by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and his associates in 1919 that served as the official organ of the Gauḍīya Maṭha institution.

Vraja—a synonym of Vṛndāvana.

Vrajapattana—"the town of Vraja"; an area in Māyāpur so named by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura for its being considered nondifferent from Vṛndāvana, and where he resided for several years prior to accepting *sannyāsa*. That area was later incorporated within the compound of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha.

Vraja-vāsa—residence in Vraja.

Vraja-vāsī—(1) a resident of Vraja; (2) a designation given by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to *vānaprastha* disciples.

Vrajendra-nandana—a name of Kṛṣṇa meaning "son of Nanda Mahārāja, the king of Vraja."

Vrata—vow or observance, usually religious.

Vṛndāvana—(1) the uppermost transcendental abode of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa; (2) the same abode descended to this planet and comprising the present town and surrounding area of Vrindaban (about ninety miles southeast of Delhi), wherein Kṛṣṇa enacted childhood and adolescent pastimes five thousand years ago.

(Śrīla) Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura—the author of *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*.

(Śrīla) Vyāsadeva—the avatar of Lord Kṛṣṇa who, approximately five thousand years ago, compiled the *Vedas, Purāṇas, Vedānta-sūtra,* and *Mahābhārata*.

Vyāsa-pūjā—the ceremony conducted on the *āvirbhāva-tithi* of a guru to honor him as a representative of Vyāsadeva. *See also* **Āvirbhāva-tithi.**

Yajña—a formal Vedic sacrifice.

Yama, Yamarāja—the lord of death.

Yantra—machine.

Yātrā—(1) a religious festival; (2) a religious theatrical performance intended for common people; (3) journey.

Yavana—a barbarian. A *yavana* is similar to a *mleccha* yet considered even more degraded. Among Bengali Hindus, *yavana* is a synonym for Muslim.

Yoga-māyā—(1) *(lowercase)* the spiritual "illusion" whereby out of intense love an infinitesimal *jīva* can assume the role of a child, friend, parent, or lover of the Supreme Lord; (2) *(uppercase)* the personification of this potency.

Yogapīṭha—the birthsite of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in Māyāpur.

Yuga—one of a cycle of four ages in the history of the universe. *See also* **Kali-yuga.**

Yuga-dharma— the process of dharma established by the Supreme Lord in each *yuga,* being the most suitable and effective according to peoples' general capabilities and disposition during that period.

Yukta-vairāgya—renunciation by engaging worldly objects in service to the Supreme Lord without having personal attachment for them. *See also* **Vairāgya**.

Guide to Obscure English Words

Some of the entries herein are listed not in their root form but as they appear within this volume. Simple definitions are given according to the specific context in which they have been used. For more precise and elaborate explanations, readers may consult a comprehensive dictionary.

Actuate—to motivate

Adage—a traditional saying that expresses a generally accepted truth

Adjudge—to regard, consider, or deem

Adroitly—skillfully, expertly

Amative—amorous, inclined to love

Amatory—pertaining to sexual love

Anile—senile

Apotheosis—deification of mortals (see vol. 3, p. 88)

Archetype—a prototype, an original model of a thing or type

Assaying—testing

Augur—to predict

Auspicate—to begin with ceremonies for invoking good fortune

Belle—a charming woman

Besotted—bewildered by (or as if by) intoxication

Bode—to be an omen of

Braggart—a boaster

Brute—irrational like an animal

Burlesque—ridiculously imitative

Cadence—a balanced rhythmic flow (as in music)

Cavil—a trivial and annoying objection

Chink—a small opening

Chitchat—a conversation about unimportant matters

Colloquy—conversation (especially formal)

Conflagration—a huge fire

Consubstantiate—to unite into a common state

Corporal— bodily, physical

Counterpart—a duplicate or close likeness; a person or thing that closely resembles another or can substitute for the other; one of two parts that together form a whole or perfectly complement each other

Crore—ten million

Crucible—a container for melting and thus purifying metals

Dearth—lack, scarcity

Delectable—tasty, very enjoyable

Dissemblance—a disguise

Ecclesiastic—pertaining to church affairs

Effacement—destruction

Emblazon—to inscribe on a heraldic flag

Emporium—a place where all kinds of desired goods are available in bulk

Envisage—to view mentally (especially a future possibility)

Esophagus—the tube that carries food from the throat to the stomach

Evanescent—temporary, prone to vanish soon

Evince—to show or demonstrate

Exult—to greatly rejoice

Felicific—giving happiness

Forswear—to fully give up

Gloss—a commentary

Gramophone—old-fashioned machine for audio playback

Guileless—without deception

Gullet—the throat

Harlequin—a clown

Harlot—a prostitute

Hullabaloo—a loud and confused situation

Hyperbolic—exaggerated

Hypothetical—proposed yet unproved

Iconoclast—one who destroys deities

Iconographer—one who creates a picture of a subject

Ignoramus— an ignorant person

Inculcate—to teach by repetition

Indomitable—unconquerable

Insolent—rude to a superior

Lakh—one hundred thousand

Laudation—an act of praise

Legerdemain—tricks meant to deceive

Licentiousness—indulgence in lust

Lucre—monetary gain

Mammon—money, materialism

Measly—so small as to be contemptible

Minion—a sycophant; one who is favored and indulged by a superior in exchange for unquestioning servitude

Modus operandi—(Latin) “method of operation”; one's personal style of executing activity

Nigh—almost, close (in time)

Non-malefic—not causing harm (see Glossary)

Nugget—a small lump (especially of gold)

Ontology—(*philosophy*) the study of the nature of existence in general, or of a particular subject; that which concerns the essence of a subject or entity

Patent—obvious

Pedant—one who is proud of his bookish knowledge yet has little actual understanding

Perdition—eternal suffering in hell

Plenitude—fullness

Plummet—to fall quickly

Praxes—modes of activity based on a branch of learning

Preponderantly—having great (or greater) influence, power, or number

Pristine—original and pure

Privation—lacking basic necessities

Procurable—obtainable

Propitious—tending to favor

Purveyor— one who gives or supplies

Putative—supposed

Ratiocination—methodical and logical reasoning

Redacted—edited, revised, converted to written form

Retrogression—a deterioration or decline

Rout—to completely defeat

Sans—without

Sapient—wise

Satiety—being gratified to the point of boredom or disgust

Scamper—to run in a light mood

Scavenger—one who searches through refuse for items to collect

Scintilla—a tiny particle

Sham—*(adj.)* fraudulent

Simian—of or relating to monkeys

Sojourn—a temporary stay in a place; to stay temporarily in a place

Solicitous—of the nature of an earnest or repeated request

Solicitude—concern

Spartan—austere

Stripling—a youth on the verge of manhood

Stultifying—crippling; rendering useless or worthless

Subsume—to include within something larger

Succor—to aid or relieve

Sufferance—tolerance

Tabernacle—the body as the temporary covering of the soul

Tempestuous—resembling a violent storm

Tether—a rope used to bind an animal to a post

Thug—a cruel or vicious person

Titan—a giant

Toponym—a place name

Transmogrify—to change into a bizarre form

Unsolicited—without being requested

Vainglorious— highly proud and boastful

Viz.—namely

Volitionally—deliberately

Vot ary— a devout believer

Whetted—sharpened

Wrangler—one who engages (or is inclined to engage) in disputes

Wrangling—a noisy or angry dispute, altercation

Zamindar—a feudal landlord in India

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Bengali and Sanskrit Quotations

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Footnotes

* References for *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* are according to the same system used for *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta.*

† From its fourth year, seventh edition, the *Gauḍīya* numbering system changed. Instead of restarting the numbering in each new issue, page numbers became cumulative throughout consecutive editions and were restarted in each new year of publication. *Gauḍīya* 4.7 began at p. 155.

* *Hy utkale puruṣottamāt*—See the full verse in vol. 1, p. 1.

* All but the last of these terms are given and further explained in Cc 1.4.83–94.

† The said verses (Brs 1.3.25–26) describe the fructification of sprouting emotions. Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura tests the genuineness of such emotions according to the criteria given in his "Prākṛta-rasa-śata-dūṣiṇī."

The word *Touchstone* is allegorically employed in its original sense—a stone for assaying gold or silver—rather than the nonstandard meaning "philosophers' stone" ascribed by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

* Paiṭha—See vol. 1, p. 399.

* These indexes appeared in his editions of *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta.*

* An allusion to his essay "'Baḍa Āmi,' 'Bhālo Āmi'" ("'Big I' versus 'good I'").

† *Śrutekṣita*—seeing, or understanding Vedic knowledge, by hearing.

* This parallels the well-known verse from *Padma Purāṇa* that begins *arcye viṣṇau śilā-dhīḥ* (see vol. 1, p. 285).

* These verses are from Cc 2.22.17 and *Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta* 107 respectively. The first declares the dependence of *karma, jñāna,* and *yoga* upon *bhakti;* the second, that *dharma, artha, kāma,* and even *mukti* are subordinate to *bhakti.*

† See vol. 1, pp. 259–60, 259.

‡ This is based on the verse beginning *mahā-prasāde govinde* (See vol. 2, p. 360).

* This parallels a statement in Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *Kalyāṇa-kalpataru* (*Upadeśa* 18):

nā uṭhiyā vṛkṣopari, ṭānāṭāni phala dhari'
duṣṭa-phala karile arjana

Without climbing the tree, attempting to collect its fruits simply by tugging at them will yield only fruits of poor quality.

* The apparent contradiction implicit in this couplet may be resolved by understanding that a devotee never makes disciples on his own behalf, but does so only as a service to his own guru and the *paramparā-ācāryas*. This attitude was perfectly exemplified by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura himself. (See further statements of his on this topic in vol. 2, pp. 257–58)

* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī defined *kuyogī* as "false devotee devoid of character" (Gv 1.153).

* For a brief history of Gauḍapura and its identification with Māyāpur, see *Gauḍīya* 6.517–18.

† Apparently the name Gauḍa-pūrṇānanda was mistakenly attributed to Śrī Madhvācārya. In 1894 a booklet called *Tattva-muktāvalī,* or *Māyāvāda-śata-dūṣaṇī,* authored by Śrī Gauḍa-pūrṇānanda, was translated and published by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who equated Gauḍa-pūrṇānanda with Madhva. Subsequently, adherents of the Mādhva *sampradāya* pointed out that this work is not included in traditional lists of Madhva's writings and denied any connection with its author.

‡ *Aṣṭādaśākṣara*—eighteen-syllable. For explanation, see the end of this section.

* That Gauḍīyas are devotees of Śrī Rādhā is not contradictory to the above statement that their object of worship is Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Devotees of Rādhā worship Kṛṣṇa because doing so pleases Her.

* The five principal methods of devotional service are listed in vol. 1, p. 203.

* Kāśī—Banaras; Dākṣiṇātya—South India.

* This alludes to the allegory in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (2.20.127–41) of a buried treasure: An astrologer warned that access to the treasure was blocked from the south by wasps, from the west by a ghost, and from the north by a black snake, but that digging in the east would at once uncover the treasure. Similarly, the treasure of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is blocked by the biting wasps of karma, the ghost of *jñāna,* and the snake of yoga, but that treasure is easily attained by *bhakti.*

* Rule of three—the process for determining the unknown term in a ratio comprised of three known numbers.

* Although present manifestations of the Gauḍīya Maṭha may appear different from that

described by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, it should be understood that the genuine, pristine, ideal Gauḍīya Maṭha is an eternal attribute of his personage and is inherently as pure and glorious as he.

* *Antaḥ śākto... mataḥ*—a saying indicating an unprincipled religionist who "bends with the wind," who for his own advantage presents himself according to others' taste.

* The standard rendering is *kapyāsaṁ-puṇḍarīkam evam akṣiṇī* (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 1.6.7).

* This example is clarified in a conversation with Professor Suthers (See vol. 1, pp. 189–90).

* See vol. 2, p. 148, fn *.

* *Śrī-guru-pāda-padma*—"the lotus feet of the guru"; a respectful address for a guru.

* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī would often cite this verse from Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Stava-mālā* to demonstrate the mood of a surrendered devotee.

* *Jana-saṅga* is the opposite of *sajātīya-āśaya* and is described in Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Upadeśāmṛta* (2) as one of the factors that destroy devotional advancement. *Jana-saṅga* is synonymous with *vijātīya-āśaya* or *anya-jātīya-āśaya,* both meaning "desire to associate with persons who do not share one's ideals."

† *Ānukūlyasya saṅkalpaḥ prātikūlyasya varjanam*—one should accept everything favorable, and reject everything unfavorable, for advancement in *bhakti* (from the description of *śaraṇāgati* in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* 11.676). Although this verse was not composed by Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, being central to his teachings it may be identified with him.

* It is unknown to whom these names refer. "S. Dey" may indicate S.K. De, mentioned in vol. 1, pp. 306–7.

† Abhimanyu—the supposed husband of Rādhārāṇī. Ulucaṇḍī—a fearsome goddess worshiped mostly by illiterates, reputed to inflict terrible punishment on those who neglect her.

* The logic of half a hen—See vol. 1, p. xxiii, fn *.

† Fuelled by speculation, shares of the eighteenth-century South Sea Company soared, then shortly collapsed. This kind of syndrome became known as the South Sea Bubble.

* These two verses relate to the incident wherein Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's son died while Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was dancing in his house.

* From *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* (11.451):

madhura-madhuram etan maṅgalaṁ maṅgalānāṁ

sakala-nigama-vallī-sat-phalaṁ cit-svarūpaṁ
sakṛd api parigītaṁ śraddhayā helayā vā
bhṛgu-vara nara-mātraṁ tārayet kṛṣṇa-nāma

The chanting of *harināma* is the most beneficial of all spiritual and pious activities and is more relishable than the sweetest honey. It is the transcendental fruit of the *śruti.* O best of the Bhārgavas, if any person even once chants *harināma* offenselessly, be it with *śraddhā* or derisive indifference, *harināma* immediately offers him liberation.

* Menakā and Urvaśī—belles whose romances are recounted in *Mahābhārata* and other scriptures.

* Harā—Rādhā.

* *Abhigacchet*—See the stanza quoted from *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad,* just above.

* These and other technical terms in this paragraph describe emotional transformations on a high platform of *bhakti* that are elaborated in the *Dakṣiṇa-vibhāga* (southern division) of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu.*

* This translation is specific to the context.

* *Bhāṅgī* (Hindi)—corresponds to the caste in Bengal known as *methara* (see vol. 2, p. 334, fn †). In traditional Hindu society only outcastes would keep dogs inside their residence.

* See translation, vol. 3, p. 92.

* This is a rough translation of the preceding verse. For a full translation, see vol. 3, p. 84.

* Kalighat—the site of a famous temple of Kālī, to whom animals are sacrificed and the meat eaten by her votaries.

* This sentence corresponds to the first two lines of the song. The subsequent lines consist of names of Lord Caitanya and some of His leading associates, each line preceded by *smara* (remember).

* See vol. 1, p. 290.

* *Akhila*—all; *mūrti*—the very form of; *amṛta*—nectar. *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* begins with the compound word *akhila-rasāmṛta-mūrti.*

* In other words, the truth is unattainable by ratiocination.

* For the background to the posing of these queries, see vol. 2, p. 73.

† Nonviolent noncooperation was Gandhi's famed policy aimed at securing India's political independence.

* Caitanyābda—the calendar calculated from the birthdate of Lord Caitanya. “Christian fashion” presumably refers to using Arabic numerals.

† Caitra being the twelfth month in the Bengali secular calendar, its last day would also be the final day of the year.

‡ This query alludes to contradictions arising from the caste Goswamis’ considering Maharaja Nandī a *śūdra,* far below their status, yet conversely offering him respect in return for his unstinting patronage.

* These terms from *Gīta-govinda, Govinda-līlāmṛta, Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi,* and other *rasa-śāstras* refer to highly confidential pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and are the subject of many songs by Govinda dāsa, Jñāna dāsa, and other famous Gauḍīya poets. The meanings are:

rasālasa—fatigue after *rāsa-līlā*; *kuñja-bhaṅga*—conclusion of pastimes in the forest groves and subsequent departure of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa; *dāna-līlā*—pastime of exacting a toll; *rūpa-abhisāra*—lamenting that She could not attain Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā discusses His beauty; *vāsaka-sajjā*—decoration by the heroine of Herself and the pastime bower in preparation for a tryst with Kṛṣṇa; *utkaṇṭhā*—the *gopī* longing to meet Kṛṣṇa; *vipralabdhā*—the heroine waits in the place of rendezvous, but Kṛṣṇa never comes; *khaṇḍitā*—when Kṛṣṇa arrives late, His body bearing signs of having enjoyed with another lover, the jilted heroine becomes extremely jealous and either pouts or rebukes Him; *rasodgāra*—from an arriving friend the heroine hears news of Kṛṣṇa's present activities; *rūpānurāga*—attachment to the form of Kṛṣṇa; *abhisāra*—tryst; *milana*— meeting; *nitya-rāga*—the specific eternal attachment of an individual to Kṛṣṇa; *alasa* — *rasālasa*; *jāgaraṇa*—sleeplessness, or waking up; *svādhīna-bhartṛkā*—a heroine who dominates her lover.

† This quotation is given more fully in vol. 2, p. 181.

* These are the names of various strains of *apa-sampradāyas,* the most prominent of which have been described in vol. 2, pp. 93–137.

* *Pañcāyata*—a traditional intracaste court.

† *Faujdar* and *chaḍidar* indicate positions of law-enforcing authority.

* Khardaha—the main seat of the Nityānanda-*vaṁśa.*

* This opinion of caste Goswamis was by *smārtas*.

* See the verse regarding these facets of *bhakti* (vol. 1, p. 203).

* Several quotations in this section are from various published lists of collected aphorisms. Many other well-known statements by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura are excluded herein, having already been cited within the main text of this book.

* The gurus of both Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura were reluctant to give initiation yet were practically forced to do so by the sincere determination of their disciples. Śrīla Lokanātha Gosvāmī (the guru of Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura) and Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī were recluses each with only one disciple, yet in both cases their one disciple's preaching was vast and widespread. Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī were seminal *ācāryas* who made unique and lasting contributions to the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* by initiating thousands of disciples and penning invaluable literary works.

* This poem features the literary ornament, known as *cakravāla-yamaka,* of repeating the last word of each line in the beginning of the next.

* This is a suggested translation (with intertwined explanation) of the highly allegorical second line of this verse.

* *Kamala* refers to Kamala Mañjarī, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's identity in Vraja, and *nayana* to Nayana-maṇi Mañjarī. Thus the compound *kamala-priya-nayanam* also means "the dear Nayana of Kamala Mañjarī." Guṇa Mañjarī is the Vraja identity of Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī.

* *Nayana-maṇi* means "jewel or pearl of the eye (i.e., the pupil)," and is the name of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's *mañjarī* form in the pastimes of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. *Kṛpaṇa-nayana* also means "that which shows the way to one who is sorrowful." Thus the author expresses his plea to his eyes to carry him to wherever his beloved guru, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, may be.

* The Sanskrit for this "jewel of the eye" is *netra-tāra,* a synonym of *nayana-maṇi.*

† The word *vāṇī* appearing in this verse is also a name of the goddess Sarasvatī and thus alludes to the name of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. The terms *lagna, tārā,* and *bhavana* are astrological terms that denote zodiacal sign, star, and house respectively.

‡ The celestial Jambū River is described in SB 5.16.19–21 as being gold-lined. *Mountain* refers to Jagannātha Purī, known as Nīlācala (blue mountain).

§ This verse suggests a poetical ornament of contradiction: Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī appeared where Lord Gaurāṅga disappeared, and was placed in *samādhi* where Lord Gaurāṅga appeared.

¶ The profuse repetition of the letter *ga* in this verse is an example of the literary ornament

known as *śruty-anuprāsa,* a form of alliteration.

* The term *agamyaḥ* (unapproachable) can also mean "unintelligible."

* Bṛhaspati-vāra means Thursday, yet Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's disappearance day (1 January 1937) was a Friday. This anomaly is because in Vedic reckoning a day is calculated to finish toward the end, not middle, of the night.

* *Gṛhīta*—accepted, received.

† www.ShyamasundaraDasa.com.

‡ Having previously observed time according to the LMT zone, in 1880 Jagannātha Purī established its own unique time zone of five hours, forty-three minutes, and twenty-one seconds earlier than GMT. Since 1907, it has conformed to IST (GMT+5:30).

* Explained further on, in discussing the nature of the *mokṣa-sthānas.*

* *Anartha-nivṛtti* is signified also by the eighth *rāśi* (Vṛścika) and by Śani, the *kāraka* for the eighth *bhāva.*

* See: Bhagwan das Mittal, trans., ed., *Bhrigu Samhita* (Varanasi, India: Jyotish Prakasan, 1986).

* Raman, B.V., *Three Hundred Important Combinations* (Bangalore: Raman Publications, "Sri Rajeshwari," 1965).

* Although both *mṛtyu* and *maraṇa* (from which *māraka* is derived) mean "death," there are important differences between a *mṛtyu-sthāna* and a *māraka-sthāna*—which are beyond the scope of this essay to elaborate.

* See vol. 1, p. 312.

† In this section, "translation" means from Sanskrit to Bengali.

* *Caitanya-candrāmṛta* and *Navadvīpa-śataka* are almost identical works.

* This title is according to the list from which the entry was taken, but nowadays it is more often rendered *Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu: His Life and Precepts.*

* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had already published a translation and partial commentary on *Bhakti-sandarbha,* one of the six treatises comprising *Ṣaṭ-sandarbha.*

* Gauḍīya *siddhānta* upholds that the *jīva* belongs to the *taṭasthā-śakti* (marginal potency) of the Lord, which means that he may be either free from or bound by *māyā.*

* This seriate commentary was not completed.

† *Sajjana*—a good person; a devotee of Kṛṣṇa. In each title of these *Sajjana* articles, the word following the emdash is one of the qualities of a devotee described by Lord Caitanya in Cc 2.22.78–80.

* The six pushes are hunger, thirst, lamentation, illusion, old age, and death.

* Apparently this article is different from that featured in 1921.

* See vol. 1, p. 290.

† First appeared in *Nadia Prakash,* 7 February 1929.

* This list of sixty-four places of worship is based on that given in *Gauḍīya* 15.23– 24.45–48 (16 January 1937), a special commemoration edition published just after Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's passing. Subsequent lists, appearing in various publications, differ slightly according to inclusion or exclusion of minor centers. At the time of his departure, newspapers recorded that he had established sixty-six preaching centers.

† Worship here was established by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and developed by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. Deities installed there by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī are described in vol. 1, p. 373.

‡ Worship of deities of Śrī Sītā-Rāma established by Śrī Murāri Gupta was continued here.

* The *samādhi* was established by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Deities of Śrī Gaura-Gadādhara and Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava were established by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

† The ancient but neglected service to these deities was restored by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

‡ Service to the *samādhi* of Maheśa Paṇḍiṭa, a principal follower of Lord Nityānanda, was given over to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.

* First established by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

† Services at this ancient temple were accepted by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.

* Now part of West Bengal, Darjeeling is not within traditional Gauḍa-*maṇḍala.*

† Now reconstituted as Puruliya District in West Bengal, Manbhum is not within traditional Gauḍa-*maṇḍala.*

‡ Names of states in this section are according to current usage; during the time of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī they were differently constituted.

§ Formed shortly after India's political independence in 1947, the state of Uttar Pradesh (U.P.) as then constituted roughly corresponded to the United Provinces (also U.P.) of British times.

* "Exhibition of Theistic Education" is the rendering of *sat-śikṣā pradarśanī* that appeared on the cover of the English guidebook to the first Sat-śikṣā Pradarśanī.

* See vol. 1, p. 70.

† Established in the Madras presidency. No further information available.

‡ Mentioned in vol. 2, p. 353.

§ No information available.

¶ No information available.

** Mentioned in vol. 2, pp. 42–43, 49.

†† Mentioned in vol. 1, p. 379.

‡‡ Mentioned in vol. 1, p. 374.

§§ Mentioned in vol. 1, p. 374.

* See vol. 2, p. 321, fn †.

* Baṅka Bihārī Vraja-vāsī Bhakti Tuhina was later awarded *bābājī* status, with the name Baṅka Bihārī dāsa Bābājī.

* Śrī Jadumaṇi Pattnaik is mentioned in various places in this book. To this day, his family members have remained staunch devotees. His grandson Jānakī Ballabh Pattnaik answered several queries for this book.

† Nitāi Prabhu is a son, and Latikā Mañjarī-devī a daughter-in-law, of Śrī Sakhī Caraṇa Rāya (q.v.), a prominent disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.

* *Daṇḍa*—twenty-four minutes.

* Varanasi (Vārāṇasī) is also widely known as Kāśī, another Purāṇic name.

* This Bhakti-śāstrī course appears to be an expanded form of that introduced in 1918.

* For the *śloka* defining this, see vol. 1, p. 283.

* *Āśraya* and *viṣaya* are terms adopted from *vyākaraṇa-śāstra,* or grammar. The aspect of

Sanskrit grammar that deals with the syntactical relationships within a sentence (*kāraka*) describes that the locative case is of two types, *āśraya-saptamī* and *viṣaya-saptamī,* meaning respectively that the location is either (depending upon context) the shelter for the doer or object, or their destination. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī employed these terms in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* to describe the dynamics of *rasa.* It appears that Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura introduced the terms *āśraya-vigraha* and *viṣaya-vigraha.*

* Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī superficially belonged to this subcaste. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda wrote: "The *kāyastha* class of Bengal is regarded all over India as *śūdras.* It is said that the Bengali *kāyasthas* were originally engaged as servants of *brāhmaṇas* who came from North India to Bengal. Later, the clerical class became the *kāyasthas* in Bengal. Now there are many mixed classes known as *kāyasthas.* Sometimes it is said in Bengal that those who cannot claim any particular class belong to the *kāyastha* class. Although these *kāyasthas* are considered *śūdras,* they are very intelligent and highly educated. Most of them are professionals, such as lawyers or politicians." (Cc 2.7.63, purport)

* This fourth definition (although not employed within the context of this book) is an important usage.

* Contains all the books of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, many of his letters and transcribed lectures and conversations, and biographical works about him.

†*Gauḍīya* and *Nadia Prakash* are currently extant only in private collections. An extensive but incomplete collection is available in electronic format from Bhakti Vikāsa Swami and others.

* For publishing information, see *Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava,* vol. 1, p. 300.

Most issues of *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* are extant in electronic format (available from Bhakti Vikāsa Swami and others).

* *Saṁlāpa*—conversation. The two homonymous books feature different conversations.

* His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda much appreciated this painting when he first saw it in the ISKCON temple in Miami in 1975.

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In subentries, the name Bhaktisiddhānta is usually abbreviated as BST but is alphabetized as if spelled out. Similarly, Gauḍīya Maṭha is abbreviated in subentries as GM yet alphabetized as if spelled out. Honorifics have not been included in proper names.

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Places Visited by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

Locations are approximate. Asterisks indicate places visited but not mentioned in this book. Toponyms are according to standard usage circa 1930.

The present border of Bangladesh and partial borders of Pakistan are shown. A more detailed map of Bengal is depicted opposite.

Bengal

The present borders of Bangladesh and West Bengal are shown.

The Author

The author was born in Britain in 1957 and joined ISKCON in London in 1975. Later that year he was formally accepted as a disciple of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of ISKCON, and renamed Ilāpati dāsa.

From 1977 to 1979 Ilāpati dāsa was based in India, mostly traveling in West Bengal distributing Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. He spent the following ten years helping to pioneer ISKCON's preaching in Bangladesh, Malaysia, Myanmar, and Thailand.

In 1989 he was granted the order of *sannyāsa,* receiving the name Bhakti Vikāsa Swami, and again made his base in India. Since then he has preached Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the subcontinent, lecturing in English, Hindi, and Bengali. He also spends a few months each year preaching in the West. His television lectures in Hindi have reached millions worldwide.

Bhakti Vikāsa Swami writes extensively on Kṛṣṇa conscious topics. His books have been translated into over twenty languages, with more than seven hundred thousand in print. *Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava* is his fourteenth book.

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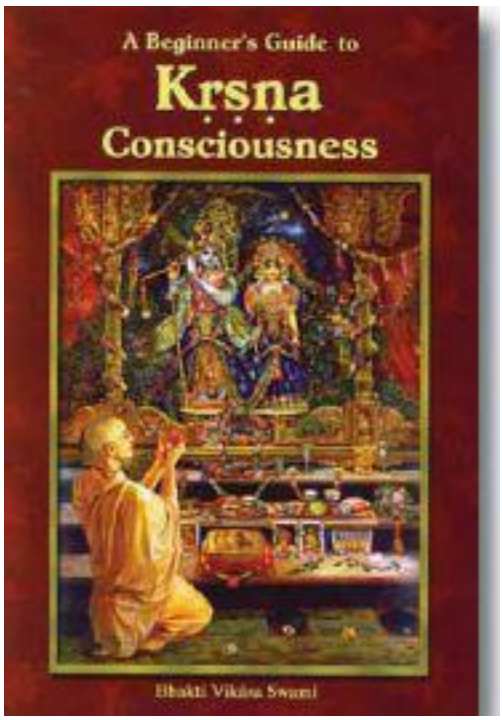

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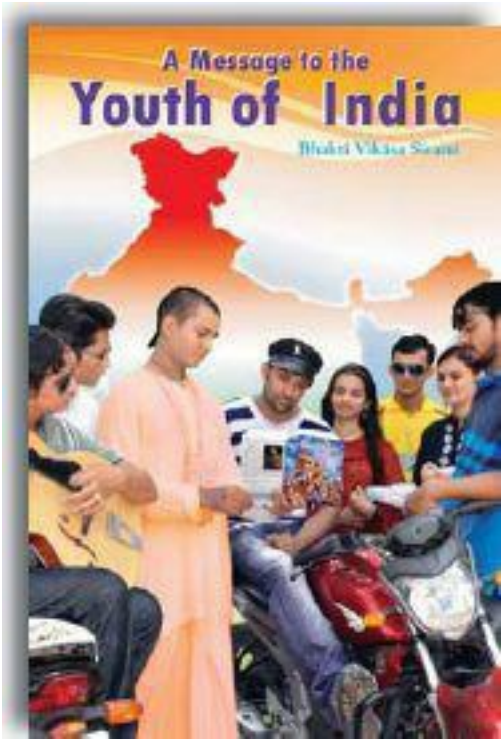

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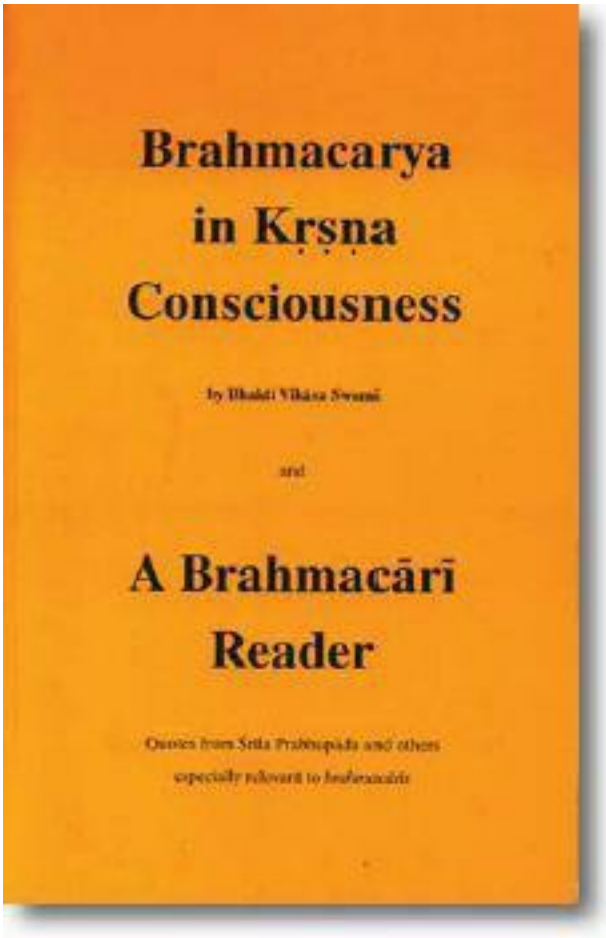

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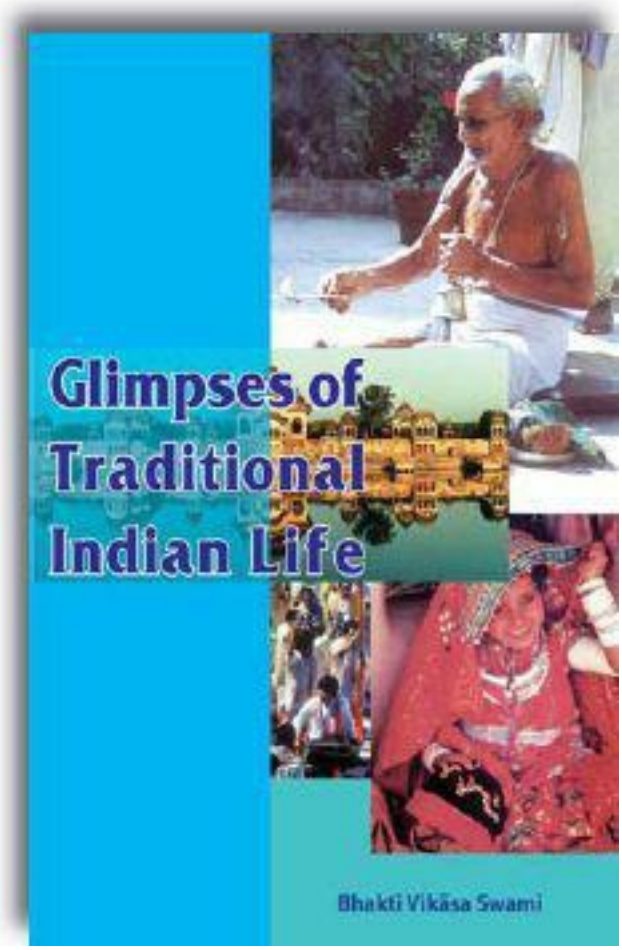

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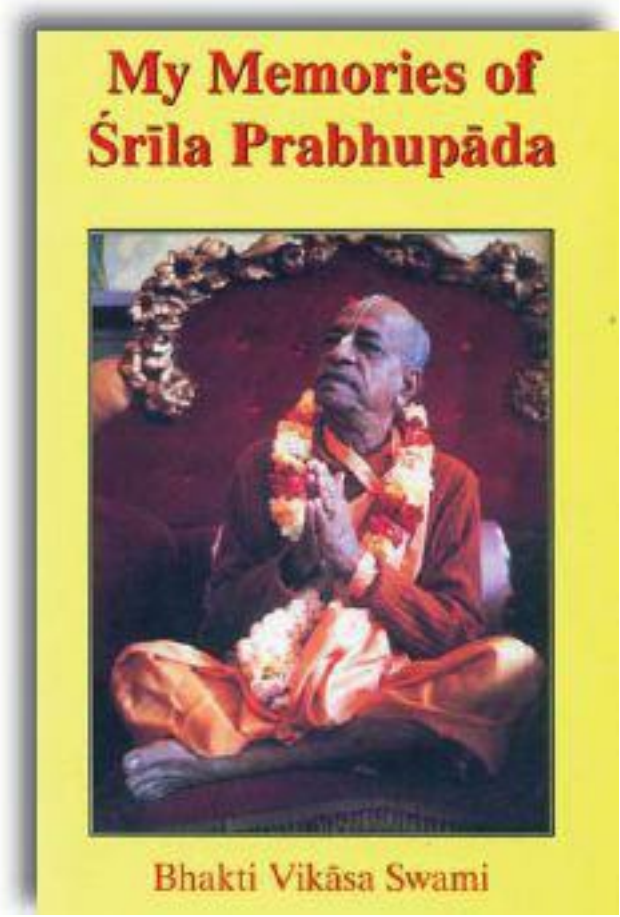

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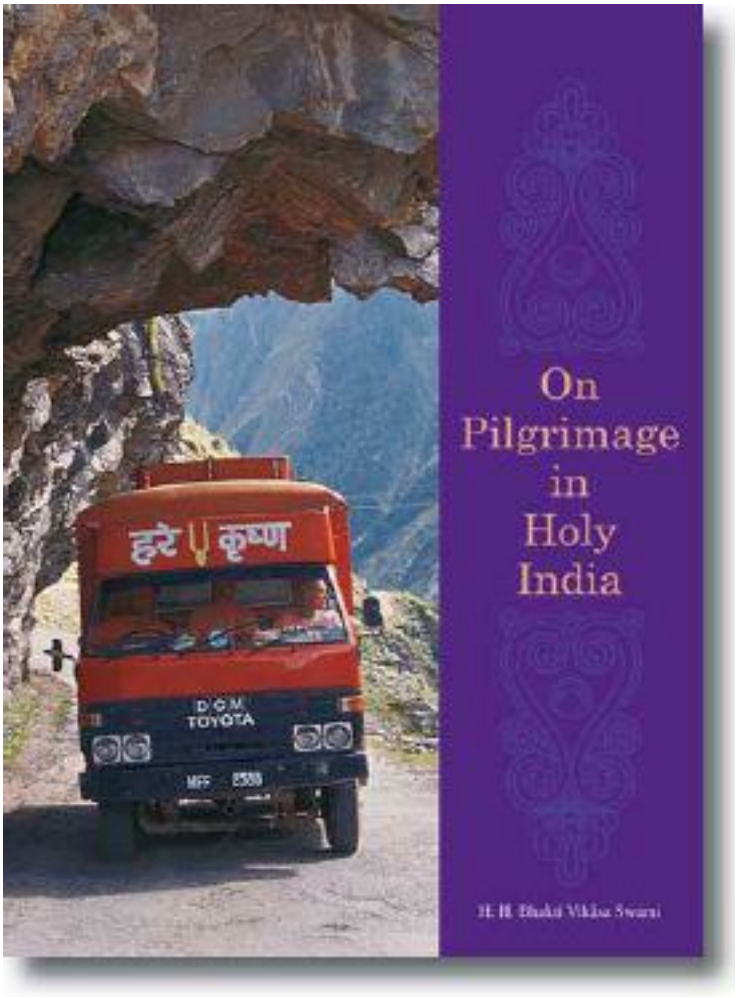

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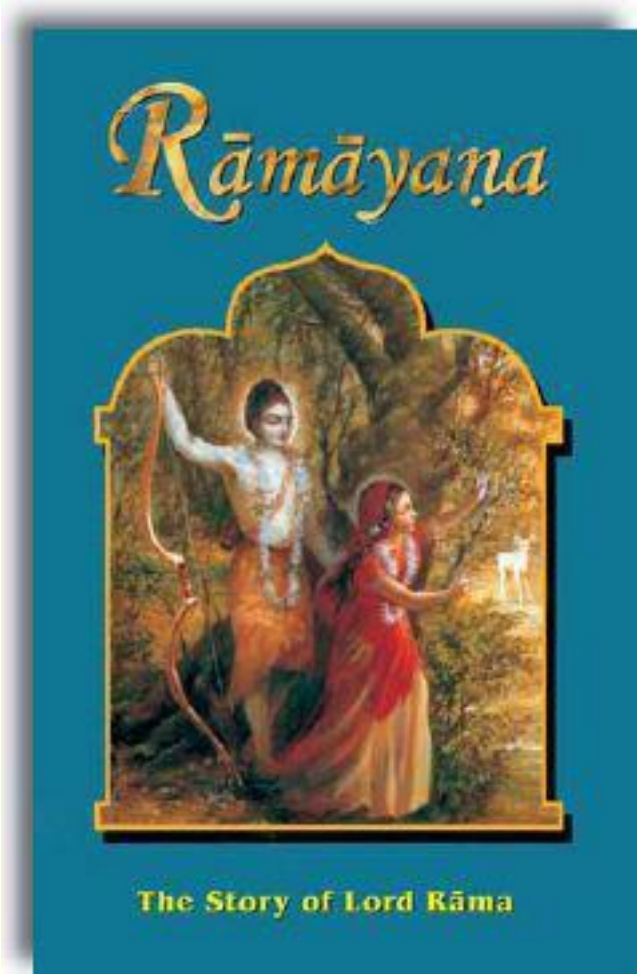

Countless eons ago, when men and animals could converse together and powerful *brāhmaṇas* would effect miracles, the uncontrollable demon Rāvaṇa was terrorizing the universe. The *Rāmāyaṇa* records the adventures of Rāma—the Lord of righteousness—as He struggles to overcome the forces of Rāvaṇa. This absorbing narration has delighted and enlightened countless generations in India, and its timeless spiritual insights are compellingly relevant in today's confused world.

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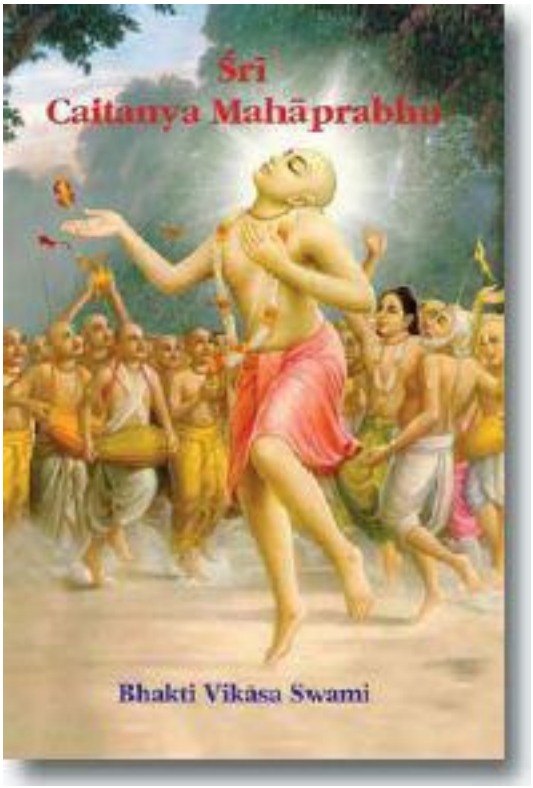

Hundreds of thousands of people throughout the world now follow the spotless path of Kṛṣṇa consciousness as given by Lord Caitanya. Chanting the holy names of Kṛṣṇa and dancing in ecstasy, they desire only love of Kṛṣṇa and consider material enjoyment to be insignificant. This book gives an overview of the life and teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the most munificent avatar of God ever to grace this planet.

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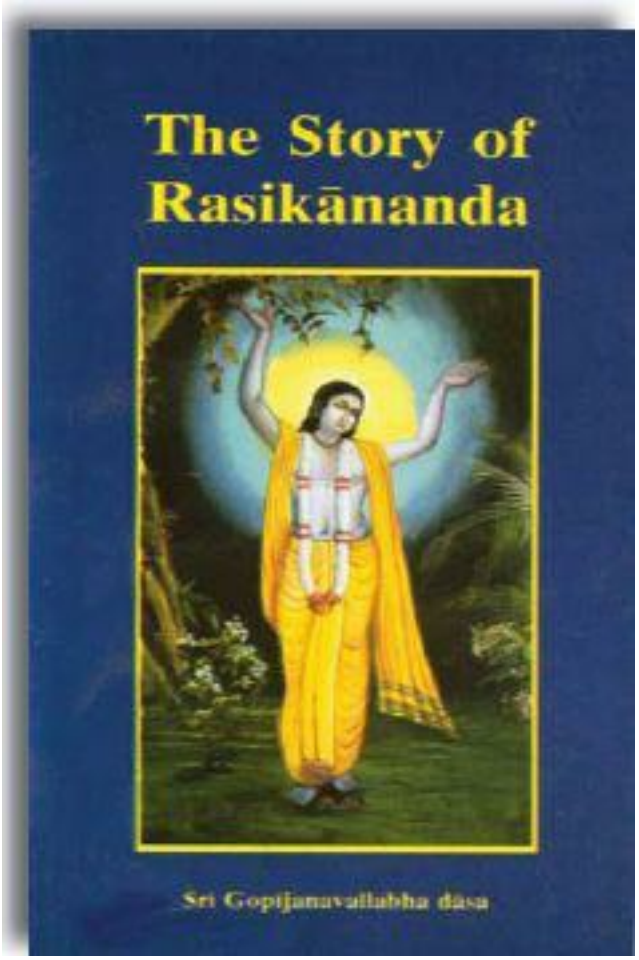

Śrī Rasikānanda-deva was a mighty Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* of the era just after Lord Caitanya's disappearance. Along with his guru, Śrīla Śyāmānanda Paṇḍita, he inundated North Orissa and neighboring districts in waves of Kṛṣṇa-*prema,* which are still flowing today. He subdued and converted atheists, blasphemers, and dacoits—and even tamed and initiated a rogue elephant!

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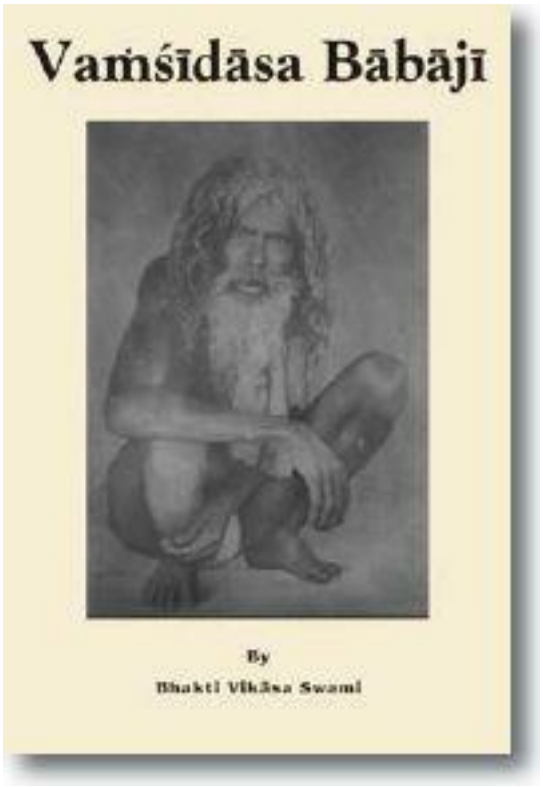

Śrīla Vaṁsīdāsa Bābājī was a great Vaiṣṇava who lived in Navadvīpa during the first half of the twentieth century. His behavior was so unusual that in any culture less spiritually enlightened than India's he almost certainly would have been considered crazy. Although physically present in this world, he had little communication with it. He was about six feet tall and strongly built. His hair and beard were uncut, matted, and dishevelled. He almost never bathed, and his eyes looked wild. He wore only a loin cloth, and nothing more.

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